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BUDDHIST

NDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

by The Venerable Sumangalo.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

by

The Venerable Sumangalo

For use in
Sunday Schools, Primary and Secondary
Schools, and for Home-instruction of
children by parents.

गुल्मी, थानपति-२ निवासी वेदराज ज्ञवालीद्वारा
..वाल्मीकि...विद्यापीठ..पुस्तकालयलाई
उपहार....स्वरूप..प्रदान !
व.रा.ज्ञवाली
२०३२।११।२८

THE PENANG BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION
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PREFACE

In June of 1957, the senior members of the Youth Circle of the Penang Buddhist Association formed a committee to explore the possibilities of forming a Dharma school to convene each Sunday morning for the systematic instruction of Buddhist children in the truths of our religion. Fifteen members of this committee volunteered to prepare themselves to take over teaching duties. This group of volunteers found no great lack of material suitable for instructing adults in the Dharma, but when they turned their search towards lesson material for children, they found a most startling lack of anything remotely approaching the needs of a modern Sunday school. A certain amount of Buddhist literature for children was found in Chinese and Japanese language presentations, but there are few Chinese in Malaya who are completely at home in written Chinese. Moreover, even the children enrolled in the Dharma classes are well versed only in colloquial Chinese, in Penang usually the Hokkien dialect, and the terminology of Buddhism, when expressed to them in Chinese, might as well be in classical Greek or Hittite. Most of the children of P.B.A. members attend English-language schools and are better adjusted to any system of study that is carried on via the language-medium of English.

The Dharma-School General Committee intensified and broadened the search for suitable lesson material in English. The task was somewhat like looking for a lake in the Sahara Desert. Such material as we found was published from fifty to seventy-five years ago and tended to be of the dry-as-dust variety. Moreover, these so-called "lessons for children" bristled with terms in dead languages. The Jataka Stories, too, were found to be largely valueless, even for amusement, to children of the modern world. Such morals as they point up are either rather thin or else far-fetched and unrelated to the lives of normal human beings. Practically all books and pamphlets offering instruction to beginners turn out to be written for adults and, almost without exception, they contain altogether too much terminology in dead languages, a fact which seems to take its rise in an apparent belief that the deader a language the holier it is. The committee, not desiring to lend any encouragement to a continuation of this naive tradition, decided to prepare a series of systematically conceived lessons aimed at the level of understanding of our own Dharma-school children, whose average age is twelve years.

We are quite well aware that these lessons are less than perfect. We shall be only too happy to consider suggestions from our well-wishers and, in future editions, we hope to have more material, particularly story-material, for inclusion. We shall be most grateful for any such help offered us.

For an opportunity to work on these lessons in a quiet place, undisturbed by the many distractions of Penang, we are greatly indebted to Mr. Lim Sin Hock, who very graciously placed at our disposal, for several weeks, his commodious, comfortable and beautiful beach-villa at Tanjong Bungah. Our sincere thanks are also due to President Yeoh Cheang Aun, Honorary Secretary Fong Yet Mai and the Directors of the Penang Buddhist Association for having provided us with a plenteous supply of food and all other supplies necessary to our task. Mr. Ong Phoot Aun greatly facilitated our work by making available to us as many typewriters as we could use. We are grateful to Mr. Ong.

Mr. Tan Gin Chong enabled us to give our full attention to this work by assuming responsibility for supervising all the domestic arrangements at the villa. "Uncle Gin Chong", as he is known to the members of the Youth Circle, is a true friend of Buddhist youth and he has our heartfelt thanks for his kindly and keen interest in our welfare.

The advisers of the Youth Circle have earned our affectionate appreciation of their kindly attitudes towards our efforts. We are happy to thank Mr. Lim Say Eng, Mr. Khaw Cheng Joey, Mr. Lim Eng Joo, Madame Goh Quee Ee and Madame Ho Guat Joo. Likewise we extend our gratitude to the genial Mr. Lim Teong Aik, the honorary interpreter for P.B.A., for aid in rendering difficult Chinese terms into English and for his unfailing faith in us.

For the line drawings that are specially drawn for each lesson, we are grateful to Mr. Andrew Lim who gave us his talented services gladly and freely. The fine spirit shown by senior officers of numerous of the leading Buddhist organizations in Malaya, Thailand, Singapore, England, Hawaii and the United States has been most heartening to us and we are grateful to them for promising to accept the finished work in a charitable spirit. We offer our kindest thoughts to Mr. Tan Keng Lock of the Singapore Buddhist Union, Mr. Lim Tat Tean of Selangor Buddhist Association, The Buddhist Youth Circle of Malacca, Miss Pitt Chin Hui of Maha Bodhi School of Singapore, Miss Tan Siew Eng of the Phor Tay School in Penang, Dr. Ong Liang Seang of the Perak Buddhist Association, the Reverend Fun Yin of *Everlasting Light*, a Buddhist monthly magazine, Singapore, and Mr. Yap Kim Fatt, also of Singapore, who is well-known for his activity in promoting Buddhist youth movements.

Outside South-East Asia, we owe thanks for much encouragement to the Venerable Ernest K. S. Hunt of Honolulu and to the Reverend James E. Wagner of the same city. Many of the poems used in these lessons are from a book of devotions originally compiled by Dr. Hunt. The Reverend Jack Austin, Editor of *Western Buddhist*, of London, has warmed our hearts by expressing complete confidence in our ability to carry through with this task. We can only hope the finished product will not leave him with a let-down feeling. We are deeply appreciative of encouragement from almost all the Buddhist organizations in the United States, and notably the Friends of Buddhism Society of Washington, D.C., the Friends of Buddhism, New York City, and *Golden Lotus* magazine of Philadelphia. Our sincere gratitude to all these exemplary Buddhists. May their tribe increase!

We should be very remiss, indeed, if we failed to express our thanks to the many hundreds of parents of the youngsters in our P.B.A. Dharma school for the encouraging "egging on" they have given us to get at these lessons at all costs. "At all costs" has meant discontinuation of all lectures and sermons for three weeks, temporary recess of the Senior Dharma-class and a temporary complete abandonment of the usual daily activities of each of us engaged in this compilation of lessons.

We wish it to be clearly understood that we do not offer this course of study as being "the last word" in Buddhist thought. We totally disclaim any ideas of infallibility. If this result of our labours offends anyone, we ask that person to help us with constructive suggestions. Finding fault is so easy; giving constructive criticism is quite something else. It's that "something else" we, the undersigned, are after.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY!

(The Venerable) SUMANGALO
Cheah Kim Swee
Tan Seng Huat
Tan Kheng Huat
Lee Keat Lye
Oh Seong Tit
Tan Song Kean
Lim Swee Leong
Chuah Beng Hock

NOTES TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Inasmuch as it is practically impossible to find a level of expression that will be suitable for children of all ages in a Buddhist Dharma-school, it is important that parents and teachers give careful study to each lesson before attempting to teach it. If the children to be taught are eight years old or under, then there must be some "cutting down" in the way of expressing the point of the lesson. For older 'teen-agers, the lesson can be amplified. In all cases, it is well for a teacher or parent to seek stories that fit in well with each lesson. Such stories add very greatly to the meaning of a lesson and are very much to the liking of the children.

The questions found at the end of each-lesson are by no means meant to be *all* the questions that can go with the subject. The parent or teacher is expected to add questions or to change their wording as need may arise. Often it will be found that one question will lead on to a number of other questions. It is an excellent idea to encourage the children to ask their own questions and to enter into a full discussion of the subject of the day. The more lively the interest stirred up, the better the class. A plan that is followed in many Dharma schools is that of dividing each lesson into two parts. On one Sunday the lesson is taught and the teacher tries to fix each important point in the children's minds. The following Sunday there is a discussion of the lesson, and questions and answers. The questions given with each lesson are offered only as suggestions to lead on to many other questions. Practically all Dharma schools follow the plan of setting every fifth Sunday apart as a day for review of the lessons of the previous four Sundays. This procedure has proven of great value in fixing the outstanding points of the lessons in the memory of the pupils.

Probably the average class period will not go beyond half an hour, at the most. Some of the lessons will not lend themselves well to adequate handling in so short a time. It is suggested that each such long lesson be used on successive Sundays. The first Sunday half-hour period will allow time to go over the lesson in a sort of introductory fashion. The following Sunday can be a combination of review of the previous period, plus a more detailed study of any points not fully covered in the introductory period. It is well to offer every encouragement to the children to participate fully in the class, and with greatest liberty. Any attempt to force children to sit quietly for lengthy periods, behaving themselves like " little sugar angels " is a sure way to cause the youngsters to detest coming to the classes. A bit of noise-making is normal to a healthy child, and the wise teacher will not attempt to be stern in this respect. If lessons are made lively and interesting, there will be no great problem in holding the pupils' attention and maintaining the necessary amount of order and quietness. Under no circumstances should a lesson be too long.

Audio-visual methods, used in modern primary schools, fit in well with Dharma school work. If coloured slides for projection are available, they add much to the value of a lesson. If a teacher can go through old stocks of illustrated magazines and cut out pictures to pass around in class, that too, adds much to the impression the lesson creates in young minds. One of the most valuable pieces of equipment any Dharma school could have is an epidiascope projector for pictures cut out from magazines, post cards, material drawn by the various classes in the school, etc. These projectors are adjustable to the size of picture shown and practically any lesson can be illustrated by regular use of such a machine. As a rule this type of projector for still pictures is not at all expensive.

These lessons are, as already stated, designed for use in Dharma schools conducted in English. But in some sections of the Buddhist world, the children are bi-lingual and in the case of Malaya, often multi-lingual. The teacher should not hesitate to use whatever language that will make a given point clearer to the class. At the question and discussion period, if the children express themselves in a mixture of two or more languages, no attempt should be made to discourage this practice. Keep in mind that our main aim is Dharma instruction, not language coaching.

Any Dharma school committee that loses sight of the fact that children like activity, is likely to find a steady decrease in attendance. For an example of a good plan to follow: opening devotional exercises, including singing, twenty or twenty-five minutes. Classes graded according to ages follow the devotions, and a maximum of half an hour will suffice for study of lesson material. Then the children reassemble and have a twenty minute period of singing and story telling. A devotion ought to be used for closing the session. Then we come to a highly important part of Dharma school activity—guided play. The Dharma school committee ought to plan games suitable for each age-group and allot an hour or so to this activity, which may or may not seem important to the adult way of thinking, but is of great importance to children. Any attempt to make children behave as adults is foredoomed to failure. If we cannot understand the processes of the child-mind, then there's small use in even beginning a Dharma school.

Almost any fairly well stocked bookshop has books on games and also teachers' manuals on planned play. Every Dharma school committee ought to have at least a few such volumes. They will be found to be of very great help, both in making up schedules of Sunday games and also in planning genuine fun for the children on their outings and picnics. A few good teachers' manuals on child psychology are another worthwhile addition to any Dharma school committee's bookshelf.

From time to time, it is a thoroughly good idea to have *Competitions* in each age group to determine how much of the lesson material has been retained in the memory of the pupils. Small prizes are usually given to winners in these contests, and some Dharma schools hold big competitions every six months and offer fairly substantial prizes to the pupils who make the best showing.

These lessons, if used according to the suggestions herein offered, can easily see a Dharma school through about a year and a half of systematic, unrushed instruction. Much will be lost if there is no provision made for review of work done, and these review Sundays ought to come at least once in every five or six weeks, certainly not less frequently than once every two months. These reviews and Sundays set apart for special programmes will keep the children from getting the feeling that they are being overtaught. Moreover, special programmes prevent the deadliness of monotony from setting in and eventually killing the Dharma school.

No Dharma school committee ought ever to make the mistake of adhering too rigidly to an inflexible schedule of activities. Even the best of plans can become monotonous and tiresome. Radical departures now and then from the usual programme will be of great value. If it is possible to secure films, of an educational nature, but not necessarily religious, such film-shows help to keep children loyal to the Dharma school. The same is true of occasional picnics, beach outings and similar healthful activities. Experience has shown that a *dull* Dharma school is soon a *dead* one.

We have slightly condensed the admirable hints on *How To Impart Buddhism To Children* by the Venerable Thich Minch Chau Every teacher in a Dharma school ought to read these hints very carefully. There are teaching suggestions of very great value in this carefully thought-out paper by the learned Vietnamese monk. But, after all the books and articles are read and thoroughly digested, the fact remains that no two Dharma schools are likely to be quite alike and the committee of teachers in each school must constantly be on the alert for new and effective ways and means of making their teaching programme have real life and lasting success. Any Dharma school committee that is afraid to rely on its own resources for good practical ideas, is forgetting an admonition given us over and over by the Lord Buddha: "Think for yourselves—be lights on your own path—depend not on others."

HOW TO IMPART BUDDHISM TO CHILDREN

By

The Venerable Thich Minch Chau of Vietnam

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism being a religion for everyone, must also be a religion for children and young people. Buddhist youth movements have come into existence, many temples have set up activities for the purpose of applying Buddhism to the education of children, of training them to become true Buddhists. Education here expressly aims at guiding Buddhist children to live in accordance with the true spirit of Buddhism e.g. to put into practice in their daily life, these five cardinal virtues which may be called the flowers of Buddhism: (1) Exertion, (2) Sympathy and equanimity, (3) Purity, (4) Wisdom, and (5) Compassion.

WHY BUDDHISM SHOULD BE IMPARTED TO CHILDREN

We stress the importance of imparting Buddhism to children, for the following reasons :

(1) Buddhism is a religion of wisdom, where knowledge and intelligence predominate, so that a Buddhist, even if he or she be a child, should have a sound knowledge of Buddhism.

(2) Buddhism teaches that the root-cause of suffering is ignorance or failure to perceive the Truth. A Buddhist child, in order to live up to the spirit of Buddhism, should know the doctrine taught by Lord Buddha and ways and

means to put it into practice. To know it he must study and experience it in his own life.

(3) Buddhism being a religion of wisdom, often is misunderstood as a religion of superstition because many of its followers are ignorant of the Buddhist doctrine. To avoid this deplorable ignorance of the Dharma, Buddhism should be imparted to the children from their infancy.

HOW TO IMPART BUDDHISM TO CHILDREN

Methods likely to be used—Buddhism is the best medicine to cure the mental disease of all beings, but if imparted in the wrong way to the children, it might become a poison very harmful to them. Those who assume the noble responsibility of imparting Buddhism to children must be very careful and well versed in ways and means of teaching Buddhism.

There are probably six methods of imparting Buddhism to children :

(1) Teaching—Buddhist lessons are taught in the same manner as geography or chemistry is taught in the school. There must be a model lesson clearly couched in simple terms, to be given to the children at each Dharma class. The teacher expounds the lesson clearly and tries his best to help children grasp the meaning it implies without forcing them to get it by heart. This way has the advantage of following closely the syllabus adopted, of being regular and methodical; but has the disadvantage of being too theoretical, of bringing back the school-atmosphere which ought to be banned from a Sunday School or from a Buddhist youth movement.

(2) Narrating—The teacher is replaced by a narrator, who puts what he wants to impart to the children

in a narrative form. Here no lesson is needed. He just has a talk with the children, asking them questions, suggesting their replies, but following a plan already sketched mentally by himself. While he narrates, he puts questions to the children, helping their answers, so that they may participate in the narrative itself, and the class, if it may be called so, becomes active, vivid and homely. This way has the advantage of being highly attractive to the children, as questions well put may develop their intelligence and investigating habit. But the difficulty here lies with the narrative itself, which is almost an art, and to keep a class alive with narrative alone requires some talents not accessible to everyone. This way has another drawback: as no written lesson is given to the children, they may forget what they have just heard, after starting for home.

(3) Suggestion, Reasoning, Explaining—No lesson, no class is needed. The monk or the layman in charge takes advantage of every possible opportunity to develop their faculty of understanding and reasoning and thus helps them grasp the meaning of the Buddha's teachings. For instance, he leads the children to the temple to worship Lord Buddha's image, and there he may explain to the children how Lord Buddha succeeded in possessing such peaceful eyes, and such entrancing beauty. All this is not a gift from nature, but a result of aeons after aeons' endeavours and exertions. He may conclude by exhorting children to follow the virtues of exertion and purity, to always try their best to follow in Lord Buddha's footsteps and not to harbour veil thoughts towards anyone. He may explain to them why, in the temple, the sparrows build their nests within the reach of everyone, having no fear of being molested or harmed by the monks. This is due simply to the fact that monks are keeping the vow of not

harming any living creatures. And he may conclude by explaining to them that love attracts people while hatred and enmity keep them away, and by exhorting them to follow the virtue of compassion.

This method has the advantage of developing the faculty of reasoning and observation in the children, of using the light of the Dharma to explain what is occurring in their daily life. But those who use such a method must be well versed in the Dharma, must know well the characters of the children, and must possess a very active mind.

(4) By giving a proper background—The method here consists in giving to the children a proper background so that they can breathe the very atmosphere we need to impart to them. We know that children of genuine Buddhist parents grow up as genuine Buddhists in a natural way, as at home they are well familiar with a proper Buddhist environment. When the children come on Sunday to be taught Buddhism, the leader has to create the necessary background. For instance if he wants to impart the virtue of purity he has to arrange the compound where children will assemble very clean and in order, and he himself must be a pattern of cleanliness with his hair well combed if he is a layman, and his dress perfect, not in smartness but in cleanliness. When the children come, he glances at their dress and their hands so as to know how far they are following the virtue of Purity, and if something is lacking, he will remonstrate with them in a friendly manner. Do not inspect children as a captain inspects soldiers on parade. You will spoil at once the friendly atmosphere you want to create. If you want to impart to the children the notion of concord and harmony among themselves, you should try to create this very

atmosphere among the batch of children under your guidance. You must treat all of them on the same footing of equality. You may have some preference for such and such children, but to be a good leader, you must nip all these feelings of partiality in the bud, and treat all children committed to your guidance equally. Of course, for some backward children, you may have more solicitude, but you should use it discreetly, especially before other children. When we fail to have such a quality, we cannot expect to impart this virtue of harmony and concord among children committed to our charge.

This method has the advantage of disposing of the whole time the children come to the temple or a Sunday School, to impart what virtue we want to impart to the children, of having more efficacy than mere teaching. But to create such a background, as we need it, is not an easy matter.

(5) By setting oneself as an example—Lord Buddha, although omniscient, seems remote to the children, who easily come under the influence of those with whom they come into contact in their daily life. Here the personality and behaviour of those who teach Buddhism play an important role in imparting Buddhism to the children. What we want to impart to the children, we need first to set an example of. There is no use in asking them to follow the virtue of Purity while we are ourselves a pattern of untidiness. Children are very confident by nature. They love, obey and follow those who love them and set a good example to them. If they find out that their leader pays merely a lip-service to the Dharma, they may lose their confidence, and their love may turn to disappointment and even to dislike, and then education becomes meaningless to them. In a Buddhist movement, we cannot use authority

and threats to win over children to us. By love alone, we may win their hearts and induce them to follow what virtues we need to impart to them. And love here always goes along with sincerity. Don't try to teach children what we are unable to put into practice ourselves. We waste our time and what is more dangerous, we may spoil the children committed to our charge.

(6) By intuitive knowledge—This method is rather abstruse and difficult to analyse. I shall give here an instance from my own experience so as to illustrate this method.

When I first became a *Samanara* (novice monk) in Vietnam, my teacher assigned me a duty that was to dust one table daily in the temple. I confess that I did the work rather unwillingly, as I thought I had not chosen to become a monk for the purpose of cleaning a table. When I finished my work, my teacher would come and see my job done, put his hand to the remotest and innermost part of the table, extract some dust left there by me and ask me to do my job again, saying " How can you become a good monk without knowing how to dust a table? " I had to do my work again, more grudgingly of course, but anyhow, the work had been done nicely this time. One day he came to observe my doing the work, and after a time, he said: " When you are clearing away the dust from this table, think as if you are clearing the *Klesa* dust within you." His words gave me a start, and in a flash, I grasped the meaning my teacher intended to convey to me, and needless to say, from this time onwards, I did my dusting work heartily. One day I put a basin of water before him rather clumsily and the basin struck the table with a clang. My teacher got up, took the basin up and put it down again on the table without a sound. He did not even glance at me, and resumed his work placidly, but I never forgot the teaching. So, this method is rather hazy and indefinite, to be known only between teacher and pupils. Usually the children are unable to grasp the meaning we want to convey to them through this method. But, anyhow, I mentioned it here so as to deal with the question exhaustively, and at the same time to give a clue to those really interested in this question of the education of children with the help of the Dharma. From personal experience, I find this method highly instructive and having a tremendous influence upon children. I may add that to those who have attained an advanced stage in meditation practice, and to those who really love children, this method may be the best.

Now that the education of children based upon Buddhist morality is still in the experimental stage, the monk or the layman in charge of the children may use any of these six methods without stressing too much any particular one. He must know how to handle them in a flexible way and try to adopt a method which is appropriate to the children and suitable to the surrounding in which they live.

THE PROPER WAY TO IMPART BUDDHISM

(1) Imparting Buddhism to children should be in accordance with the Dharma and appropriate to the character of the children.

(a) In accordance with the Dharma—Dharma lessons should not be contrary to the Dharma. Those who assume the duty of teaching Buddhism to the children should know the Dharma well and always continue their research in the Dharma field. We know that some children are very intelligent, of a curious nature, and may put embarrassing questions that can baffle the teacher himself. So those who teach Dharma to children must know how to answer the questions so as to enlighten them and not to lose prestige before them. Never be proud of your knowledge of the Dharma, for the Dharma is infinite like the limitless ocean, and children's nature is fathomless like the bottomless sea.

(b) Appropriate to the character of the children—children are not grown up persons; Buddhism taught to them must not be the same as that taught to grown up persons. Teaching them too much about the suffering of humanity, depicting the horrors of human nature, has a devastating effect upon their tender minds, and may develop in them pessimism, perplexity and disgust. The result would be disastrous to them, as this way of teaching poisons their tender minds. We often come across people who take a morbid delight in depicting the loathsomeness of the human flesh, especially that of the fair sex, and this before batches of children listening with mouths wide open. Lord Buddha taught this, not as a truth in itself, but as a method of meditation to those who are prone to bodily attachment. Moreover, boys' and girls' disposition are not alike and the way of teaching Buddhism to them cannot follow the same pattern. Experience tells us that among the five virtues to be imparted to the children, girls are rather prone to the virtue of Compassion, while boys take delight in the virtue of Exertion, but both share the same attachment to the virtue of Joy and Equanimity. We narrate to both of them the Jataka story in which our Bodhisattva, in one of his previous lives, saw a tigress tormented by hunger and on the brink of devouring her cubs. Moved by pity and out of compassion for those creatures, he threw himself as a prey before her to save both the tigress and her cubs.

Boys applaud at the act of the Bodhisattva sacrificing his life to the tigress, but stop short there without proceeding further, but the girls not noticing the act of bravery, keenly feel the atrocious suffering the Bodhisattva had to undergo, when torn to pieces by the hungry tigress. A good narrator generally draws applause from the boys and tears from the girls with the same story. Both boys and girls cherish the virtue of joy and equanimity. They are in the age of smiles, of a thousand flowers. When observing them playing, shouting, singing, so innocently and so prettily, we think it a crime to mar their innocence and cheerfulness by teaching to them suffering and all that is connected with the horror of human nature. We should also notice that among boys and girls, their temperament is very complex, subjected to frequent change, in accordance with their age, their knowledge and background, so that those who teach Buddhism to them must know their temperament and character and impart Buddhism to them accordingly. Do not try to teach them too much; teach little, but suitable to their temperament and character.

(3) Invite monks and nuns now and then to teach Buddhism to children—in districts and places where monks and nuns who know Buddhism well and who understand children are available. Their life, deportment and conduct have a tremendous influence upon children, help them to understand Buddhism and, what is more important, induce them to practise what they learn from Buddhism. The same lesson taught by one who really understands and practises Buddhism yields more influence upon children than the same lesson taught by one who has no practice to his credit. Better to invite monks to teach boys, and Buddhist nuns to teach girls, at least once in a while.

(4) To create the necessary surrounding and background in a Dharma class:

(a) Time—To children under 14, half an hour is the time limit. Children become restless when compelled to sit more than half an hour. The best time to teach Buddhism is in the morning, the earlier the better. The worst time is in the evening about 5 to 6 p.m. when, tired with a day's activities, children become refractory to any teaching imparted to them.

(b) Peace and calmness—Do not allow children to indulge in strong physical activities before the Dharma class. This renders them listless and refractory to the imparting of the Dharma. Always choose a calm and peaceful place, if possible.

(c) Disposition and arrangement—Place children in a circle, so that the Dharma teacher can see all of them and notice any reaction when he imparts the Dharma to them. Do not place them in rows in the fashion of a class; this will create the illusion of a second school contrary to the spirit of a Dharma class.

(d) Separate classes for older girls and boys—If Dharma teachers are not lacking, it is better to conduct the Dharma class for girls and for boys separately. With the same Dharma lesson, the way to teach it to boys and girls is quite different. For instance, when you tell a Jataka story to the girls, you have to choose one which dwells upon the virtue of compassion and loving kindness, while to the boys, the Jataka story which relates the heroic deeds of the Bodhisattva suits best. Girls are prone to faith, admire what is graceful and peaceful; boys rather prefer what is witty, grand and noble, so that, separate Dharma classes for girls and boys are likely to yield better results.

(5) Mistakes to be avoided.

(a) Don't ask children to believe blindly—Buddhism lays much stress on intelligence and wisdom. Therefore, teaching them to believe blindly in Buddhism is going against the true spirit of Buddhism. We know that children are in the age of belief, but even then, the Dharma teacher must know how to enlighten their belief and help them to look at things in a more intelligent way.

(b) Don't cram Buddhism into the children—to cram is to heap lesson upon lesson upon the children, force them to learn by heart without giving them enough time to understand, so much so that the Dharma turns out to be an undigested food harmful to their tender minds. Buddhism differs from other religions and philosophies in that it respects individual investigation, lays stress on freedom of thought and develops the power of intelligence and wisdom.

(c) Do not confine teaching only to speech, lay stress on the practical side—try to help children to practise what we teach to them. With practice alone can children realise the true meaning of the Dharma. If we want to train children to become true Buddhists, we must help them practise in their daily life the cardinal virtues of Buddhism.

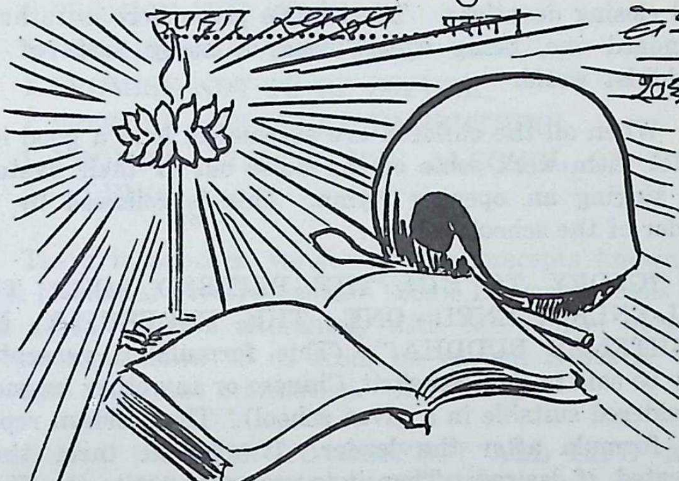
(6) Don't pay mere lip service, try to be yourselves a pattern for the children. The Dharma teachers should try to live up to what they teach to the children. We must be ourselves a pattern of tidiness, of exertion, when we try to implant these virtues in the children. The very life and deportment of the Dharma teacher has a tremendous influence upon the children, who generally look up to the Dharma teacher to regulate their behaviour.

Conclusion—Lord Buddha says "The Dharma-gift excels all gifts". When we impart Buddhism to the children, we sow the Dharma seed upon a field green with hope and rich in sap. It is a gesture that conveys so noble and lofty a meaning. We need only earnest attention, sincere endeavour and brotherly love of the children committed to our charge. And how happy we are, when we discover in their eyes, the reflection of Buddha's compassion, and on their faces, the light of wisdom of our Enlightened One.

They who yield to their desires
    Down the stream of craving swim;
As we see the spider run
    In the net himself hath spun.
Wise men cut the net and go
    Free from craving, free from woe.
Loose all behind, between, before,
    Cross thou to the other shore.
With thy mind on all sides free
    Birth and death no more shalt see.

—**Dharmapada**, 347-8.

गुल्मी, थानपति-२ निवासी वेदराज ज्ञवालीद्वारा
..वाल्मीकि..विद्यापीठ..पुस्तकालयलाई
उपहार स्वरूप ....प्रदान।
वेदराज ज्ञवाली
२०६२।११।२८



DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

The proper way to start any session of a Buddhist Dharma-school is by use of well-directed devotional exercises. The children should be taught the idea of reverence and the value of making personal devotions a regular part of every individual's life, beginning in childhood. It is quite a good idea to introduce new formulas of aspiration, subjects of meditation, new songs and poems from time to time, but it is advisable to continue any practice until the children have committed that particular devotion to memory. As a rule, we carry with us all through life, the poems and devotions we learn as boys and girls. The importance of these devotional exercises to go along with each session of a Dharma-school cannot be over-estimated. Some classes have devotions only at the opening of the session each Sunday. In other cases there are both opening and closing devotions. The sample given here is rather a standard one, being widely used in many parts of the Buddhist world.

When all the children are assembled, it is a good idea to let them work some of the noise out of their systems by singing an opening hymn. This is followed by the leader of the school saying :

"GLORY TO HIM, THE BLESSED LORD, THE ALL-ENLIGHTENED ONE, THE PERFECTLY ENLIGHTENED BUDDHA!" (This formula of veneration may be said in Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese or any other language considered suitable in a given school). The children repeat the formula after the leader. It may be three times repeated, if desired. Then it is proper to recite the Three Refuges, with the children repeating them after the chief, teacher or leader.

I TAKE MY REFUGE IN THE BUDDHA.
I TAKE MY REFUGE IN THE DHARMA.
I TAKE MY REFUGE IN THE SANGHA.

After the Three Refuges, it is a good plan to have the children recite after the leader:

> "Receive us, O Lord Buddha, as Thy disciples. We vow to learn Thy teachings. We vow to follow those holy teachings and to observe the precepts. We vow to be faithful all our lives to the sacred teachings we are now learning. May all beings be well! May all beings be happy!"

This exercise is usually followed by the Five Precepts, given here in language that is not beyond the comprehension of the very young. Needful to say, this formula is not a literal translation from the original language.

I PROMISE NOT TO KILL.
I PROMISE NOT TO STEAL.
I PROMISE NOT TO BE IMPURE.
I PROMISE NOT TO BE UNTRUTHFUL.
I PROMISE NOT TO USE ALCOHOL OR EVIL DRUGS.

There is another version of the precepts known as "The Expanded Five Precepts." Some Dharma-schools use this second version alternately with the simpler version. It has come down to us from an ancient Sanskrit text through a Chinese translation. Here it is:

(1) I PROMISE TO RESPECT ALL LIFE AND NOT TO HURT ANYTHING.
(2) I PROMISE NOT TO TAKE WHAT IS NOT MINE AND ALSO TO HELP EVERYONE TO BE MASTER OF THE FRUITS OF HIS OWN LABOURS.
(3) I PROMISE NOT ONLY TO AVOID IMPURITY BUT ALSO TO SEEK TO DO ACTUAL GOOD.
(4) I PROMISE TO AVOID ALL UNTRUTH AND DAILY TO SPEAK THE TRUTH IN A HELPFUL WAY.
(5) I PROMISE TO USE NO DRINK OR DRUG THAT WILL POISON MY BODY OR MY MIND AND I SHALL HELP OTHERS TO OVERCOME BAD HABITS.

Experience has shown that children like to sing, and it is well to insert a hymn or other song at regular intervals in devotion periods. Usually not less than three songs are used in a devotional period and, if desired, a full half-hour period may occasionally be set apart for singing. If there is no closing devotional period, then the opening period may be brought to a close by reciting:

THE GOLDEN CHAIN OF LOVE

> "I am a link in Lord Buddha's golden chain of love that stretches around the world. I must keep my link bright and strong. I must think only good thoughts. I must speak only good words. I must do only good deeds. May all people everywhere become links in Lord Buddha's golden chain of love."

If there is a closing devotion for the end of the session, then this Golden Chain recitation may be reserved for that time and it is usual to precede and follow it with a hymn.

Once or twice a month it is a good plan to encourage the children to practise the meditation postures in either the single or double lotus positions. The following formula, known as "the Radiation of Goodwill" is then silently "broadcast" by the boys and girls.

> "We surround all men and all forms of life with infinite love and compassion. Particularly do we send forth loving thoughts to those in suffering and sorrow, to all those in doubt and ignorance, to all who are striving to find Truth, and to those whose feet are standing close to the gate men call death, we send forth oceans of compassion, love and mercy."

Many Dharma schools have a little ceremony at each session, for the offering of flowers and joss sticks. The children seem to enjoy this activity, and one of the various verses that can be taught the pupils to use as they make their offerings is:

"Homage to the Lord most holy,
Light of Truth's Eternal Sun,
Honour, love and adoration
Unto Him, The Perfect One.

A good plan is to let the girls offer the flowers and the boys the joss sticks on one Sunday and, the following Sunday, to reverse the procedure. Another quotation that can be used as an alternative to the one above given is:

> "Lord Buddha, we offer these flowers at Thy shrine that their perishable beauty may remind us of the unfading beauty of Thy Dharma. May the sweet scent of these joss sticks remind us of the nobility of holy living. May all beings be well; may all be happy."

As a rule, several Sundays, usually not less than two, are required to get the children well practised in the hymns and recitations. It is for this reason that these devotional exercises are listed as Lessons One and Two. Care should be taken that the Dharma school does not lapse into a mere gathering for devotional acts. Devotion has its very real values, but the primary reason for the existence of a Dharma school is to give instruction in the basic teachings of our religion. If we lose sight of that aim, then we no longer have a genuine Dharma school. Let us give everything its proper place and proper value, carefully avoiding all extremes. This course of action will keep us on The Noble Middle Path.

As a responsive reading or recitation, *The Seven Jewels of the Dharma* is much favoured in Dharma-schools. Usually the teacher reads the first line and the children reply with the second line, and so on. To avoid monotony, it is a good plan to alternate the various devotions given herein. In this way the children learn a wide range of holy thoughts to store away in their young minds and keep with them all through life.

THE SEVEN JEWELS OF THE DHARMA

Leader: Blessed are they that reject evil.

Children: For they shall attain purity.

Leader: Blessed are they that aspire to holiness.

Children: For they shall attain serenity.

Leader: Blessed are they that pursue knowledge.

Children: For they shall attain understanding.

Leader: Blessed are they that promote peace.

Children: For they shall attain true happiness.

Leader: Blessed are they that seek truth.

Children: For they shall attain wisdom.

Leader: Blessed are they that practise virtue.

Children: For they shall attain perfection.

Leader: Blessed are they that follow The Path.

Children: For they shall attain enlightenment.

One of the most beautiful invocations ever to come from any language or country is from ancient Siam and is known as:

THE INVOCATION OF THE ETERNAL

O Thou Eternal One,
O Thou Perfection of Time,
Thou Truest Truth.
Thou Immutable Essence of All Change.
Thou Most Exalted Radiance,
Thou Radiance of Mercy.
Thou Infinite, Thou Infinite Compassion,
Thou Pity, Thou Pity.
Thou Charity, Thou Infinite Charity,
O Thou Eternal One, O Thou Eternal One.

Whenever a devotion contains words of a nature not likely to be easily understood by children, such terms should be carefully explained to the class. In this way it is unnecessary to alter the beauty of the original utterance. Moreover, when the children have reached adulthood they will remember the devotion in all its beauty and will profit all through life by keeping its deep truth in mind.

THE LIFE STORY OF LORD BUDDHA

One fine day about twenty-six centuries ago, a son was born to King Suddhodhana and Queen Mahamaya of the country of the Sakyas in northern India. The child was named Siddhartha. Seven days after the birth of Prince Siddhartha, Queen Mahamaya died.

A hermit was called to the palace to predict the prince's future. This sage foretold that Prince Siddhartha would become either a Buddha or else a ruler of the world. The hermit foretold that if the prince saw four certain sights he would renounce the world and become a Buddha. These four sights were declared to be an old man bent with age.

a sick man in great pain, a dead man and a wandering beggar. The king desired his son to grow up to be a ruler of the world and decided to keep all knowledge of pain and sorrow from him. The Gautama family, into which Siddhartha was born, was very ambitious for the young prince.

Siddhartha's education began early in life and he was taught all the leading arts of that time. He became a skilful archer, a clever swordsman and a good rider. Soon his knowledge became greater than that of his teachers. His father gave him everything the heart could desire and the young prince did not know there was sorrow anywhere in the world. At an early age he was married to the beautiful Princess Yasodhara. The king built for him three large and beautiful palaces, one for each of the three seasons of India, and he and his wife lived happily in all this luxury.

One day Siddhartha sent for Channa, his charioteer, and they drove to the royal pleasure grounds. On their way they came across an old man bent with his advanced age, just as had been predicted at Siddhartha's birth. At this sight, Siddhartha asked Channa why the man was in such a condition. Channa told him that all men became like that if they lived to great age. This news made the prince very unhappy and he told Channa to drive back to the palace. When the king heard that the first prediction had been fulfilled, he was very disturbed and ordered that all sorrowful sights be kept away from his son.

Soon the prince forgot all about the incident and, once again, Channa drove his master to the royal pleasure gardens. On their way they met with the second of the predictions, a man suffering from great pain. The poor man's legs and body were swollen. Siddhartha, filled with great pity, jumped down from his chariot to help the suffering man. He asked Channa to tell him why this man acted so strangely. Thus the prince learned about sickness and pain and the second prediction was fulfilled. The prince returned sadly to his palace. When the king heard of this occurrence he was greatly disturbed, because his son had now seen two of the predictions.

After some days, the prince drove out in his chariot once more. This time they saw a dead body lying by the roadside. Prince Siddhartha then asked what this sight meant and Channa told him of death and how it comes to all living beings. Once more the prince returned to his palace with a heavy heart, wondering why these sad things happened. When the king heard that the third prediction had been fulfilled, he was more distressed than ever. The king did not wish his son to become a Buddha. The warlike Sakyas preferred to be rulers of the world.

After some days had passed, the prince once more asked Channa to drive him about the city and into the great parks. On this drive they passed a man with shaven head, dressed in yellow robes and carrying a bowl in his hands. This man seemed to be peaceful and happy as he walked quietly along. Siddhartha saw people come out from their houses and place food in the bowl carried by the man in yellow robes. The prince asked Channa who the man was and why he wore such strange clothing and carried a bowl in his hands. Channa told his master that the man with shaven head was a religious mendicant, a monk, who got his food by begging, after having renounced the world. Thus was the fourth prediction fulfilled.

When Channa drove the prince back home he saw that his master was very thoughtful. This was because

Siddhartha had decided that he, too, wished to renounce the world and its pleasures and seek for the cause of sorrow and sickness, old age and death. After he made this decision he felt calm and peaceful. But, just at this moment, a messenger arrived to tell him that a son was born to him. The baby prince was given the name of Rahula. There were great celebrations of joy over the birth of the little prince, but Siddhartha did not join in the merry-making. He had made up his mind to go away and become a wandering, homeless monk.

At midnight, when the merry-making was still going on, the prince called Channa and told him to saddle Kanthaka, the prince's horse. Siddhartha told Channa that he was going to go away from home and become a wanderer seeking the cause of human misery. While Channa was putting the saddle on Kanthaka, the prince went to his wife's room and took a last look at Yasodhara and the little prince, his son. Both were sleeping peacefully. Siddhartha turned and swiftly went down to the courtyard and mounted his horse. His mind was made up. He and Channa rode a great distance and, finally, they came to a place where Siddhartha removed his royal robes, cut off his long hair and put on yellow robes. Then he ordered Channa to take the horse and return to Kapilavastu, the capital city of the Sakyas. Channa's heart was very sad to receive this command, but he obeyed his master and went away. This act on Prince Siddhartha's part is known as "the Great Renunciation."

Siddhartha then became a common poor wanderer, begging for his food and having no home he could call his own. At first he found this life very hard to bear, after having lived for so long in princely fashion, but he soon got used to the hardship. He slept in forests and caves and constantly was looking for a holy teacher who could tell him why there is always sorrow in life. But this was like looking for a needle in a haystack and, no matter how much patience he had, he never succeeded in getting the answer to the riddle of life.

For six years Siddhartha almost starved himself, hoping that by this extreme way of life he might obtain enlightenment. Because he led such a strict life he became known as a very holy man and some followers were attracted to him. Five became his disciples and followed him everywhere. But one day Siddhartha was almost dead from hunger and thirst and the effects of having lived such a hard life. He saw he was no nearer to enlightenment than when he had started his search. So he decided to follow a middle way that would avoid all extremes. When he began to take sufficient food and to live normally, his followers left him because they thought Siddhartha was no longer holy.

Finally Siddhartha saw clearly that the only way he could ever find the truth would be to find it for himself. He seated himself under the spreading boughs of a giant tree and vowed he would never leave the spot until he had attained enlightenment. For forty nine days and nights he sat in meditation and, as the morning star of Vaisakha came into view, he gained final, complete and perfect enlightenment and knew the cause and cure of all human sorrow. The tree has ever since been known as "the Bodhi Tree" — the tree of enlightenment. After the enlightenment, Prince Siddhartha was known only as The Buddha, which means "He who knows."

The enlightenment took place when the Buddha was thirty-five years old. He took pity on the world and decided to teach the Dharma (the system that leads to freedom from sorrow) to all who would listen. For forty-five years He wandered over much of India and taught. Many, many thousands listened reverently to Him and there was great sorrow when He finally passed away at the age of eighty. But Lord Buddha said that He would live in His teachings. Therefore, if we really wish to know Lord Buddha and honour Him, the best way to do that is to study the Dharma and then try to practise it in our lives. That is the main reason why we are studying these lessons about the Buddha's teachings. If we really learn these lessons and use them in our daily lives then we shall be making a good start on the road to happiness.

QUESTIONS

1. About how long ago was Lord Buddha born?
2. What is a century?
3. Where was the Buddha born?
4. What was His personal name?
5. What was His family name?
6. What was the name of His nation?
7. What was predicted about the future of Prince Siddhartha?
8. What four things did the hermit say the prince would see?
9. What subjects did the young prince learn?
10. Was he a good pupil?
11. What was his father's name?
12. What was his mother's name?

12. What were the names of Siddhartha's wife and little son?

13. What is a chariot? What was the name of the man who drove the chariot for Prince Siddhartha?

14. What was the name of Siddhartha's horse?

15. What is (a) an archer? (b) a swordsman? (c) a warrior?

16. Did the Sakyas love pleasure? Did they have amusement parks?

17. Why did Siddhartha almost starve himself after he became a monk?

18. Did this starvation help him to find out the cause and cure of sorrow?

19. How many disciples did Siddhartha have at first?

20. Why did they leave him?

21. Where did Siddhartha become the Buddha?

22. What does the word Buddha mean?

23. How old was Lord Buddha when He became enlightened?

24. How many years did He preach?

25. Did He gain many followers?

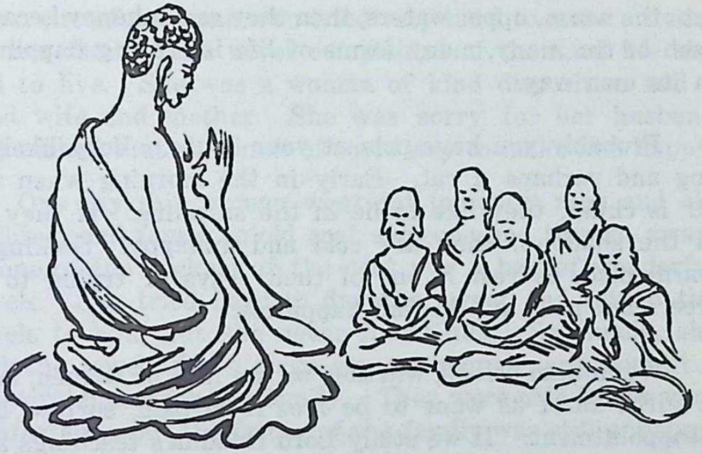
26. How old was He when He died?

27. Why do we study Lord Buddha's teachings?

28. What else must we do besides study the teachings?

29. If we follow Lord Buddha's Dharma, we are on the road to........

30. By what name do we now call our religion?



THE ONE MAIN TEACHING

The Lord Buddha told us He had only one main teaching and all of it concerns the cause of unhappiness and how to think and act in ways that will bring us freedom from unhappiness.

All living things want to be free from pain and other forms of unhappiness. Even little worms on the footpath feel pain and thus are unhappy if we step on them. There are many forms of life, some low, others high, but even the least developed living things seek happiness in their own ways. If we go to a river or a brook, we see that some fishes like to be close to the top of the water, near the sunlight. If something frightens them away from the surface and they have to go deeply into the darkness of the cold water, then they are unhappy and return to the upper, sunlit, warm water as soon as they feel it is safe. If the fishes that like the deep, dark, cold waters are frightened into the warm, upper waters, then they are unhappy because each of the many, many forms of life is seeking happiness in its own way.

Probably you have pets at your house. Very likely a dog and perhaps a cat. Early in the morning when the air is chilly, they like to lie in the sunshine. If they lie in the shadows, they are cold and unhappy. Seeking a warm place to rest is one of their ways of trying to be free from pain and to find happiness.

We human beings, whether we are men or women, boys or girls, all of us want to be free from pain, sorrow, and disappointment. If we study Lord Buddha's teachings and live the way He advised us to live, we shall find out how to live happily. But this means following a plan, and these Dharma-school lessons will show us that plan, if we will come to classes regularly, pay close attention to the lessons and try hard to remember them.

Every girl knows that if she wishes to make a dress she must have a pattern. Otherwise the dress will not be a good one. If a boy wishes to make a model aeroplane he knows he must follow the sketch or design that goes with the plane-building materials he has bought. If he does not follow the design, then he will only waste his materials. It is the same with our own happiness. If we do not know Lord Buddha's plan, His pattern for our lives, then we are wasting our lives and finding only unhappiness. If we learn Lord Buddha's pattern for living, and follow it, then we will find happiness.

Once there was a family so poor that they made their living by rag-picking. The father was lazy and unhappy. He complained all day long about his hard life. His wife was a cheerful woman who tried very hard to make a living for her family, and never complained of the hard life she had to live. She was a woman of kind disposition and a good wife and mother. She was sorry for her husband and wished that she knew of some way to make him happy.

One day this woman went out to collect rags and old clothing, and found an old coat someone had thrown away. In one of the pockets of the coat was a bag of wonderful jewels. She tried hard to find the owner and return the jewels to him, but she never found him. So, finally, she sold the jewels for a large sum of money, and bought a beautiful house for her family. They were able to live very comfortably, but the father of the family was still unhappy.

At sunrise one day, Sakradevaraja, King of the Gods, looked down from his heaven and saw this good woman going cheerfully about her duties. He decided to reward her for her virtues, so he suddenly stood before her and told her she might have any wish she cared to ask for. At once this good woman asked Sakradevaraja to make her husband happy. A sad look came over the face of the King of the Gods, and he answered, "That is one thing even the gods cannot do for another; each must make his own happiness for himself. I can give you houses, lands, cattle and many other things, but even Lord Buddha cannot make anyone happy. Even He can only show us the way by which we can make ourselves happy."

THE PATH OF LIGHT

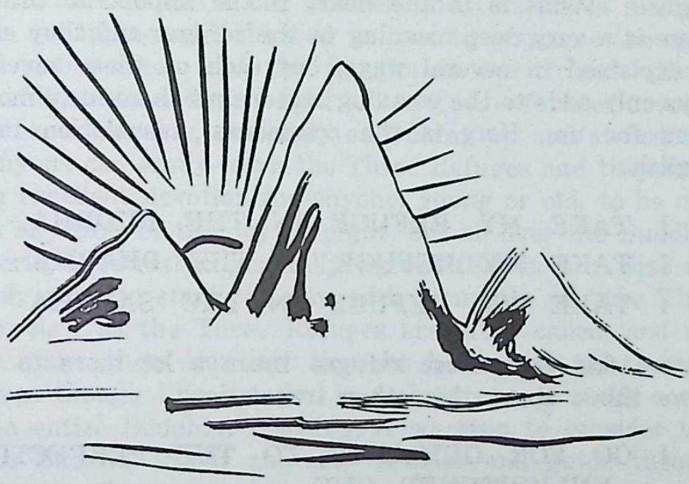
Oh, Light of Asia, lighten our dark West
With Wisdom garnered from Thy Holy Quest,
Show us the Path which leads to sorrow's cure,
The sorrows that all living things endure.

Thy gentle teaching in our minds instil,
That none can prosper who treat others ill.
But he who cherishes goodwill to all
Earth's living creatures whether great or small,
Through their content his sufferings shall cease,
And he shall walk the Path of perfect peace.

— Geraldine Lyster.

QUESTIONS

1. Did Lord Buddha have one main teaching or several?
2. What is this main teaching?
3. Is it natural to want to be unhappy?
4. Do all living things want happiness?
5. Can such a tiny living thing as a worm know pain and sorrow?
6. What is a pattern?
7. Is Lord Buddha's teaching just something to believe, or is it a plan (pattern)?
8. Can a girl cut and sew a really good dress if she has no pattern to go by?
9. Can a boy build a good model aeroplane without a design to show him how to go ahead?
10. Can Lord Buddha make us happy, or must each of us do that for himself?



THE THREE REFUGES

In order to become a Buddhist it is not necessary to go through any set ceremony or any form of "baptism" or to shave one's head or adopt any special type of clothing. The followers of some religions require the male members to wear beards and dress their hair in a certain style. Still other religions require their followers to wear coloured marks on their forehead and dress in a distinctive way. We have none of this in Buddhism. The only real way to be a Buddhist is to know Lord Buddha's teaching and to follow it. But, as a rule, most people who decide to follow the Buddha's teaching like to have some sort of simple ceremony to indicate that they have made this important decision. The ceremony we usually employ is known as "taking the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts." This lesson will be about the Three Refuges and what they mean to us. It is not important whether the little ceremony is all in Pali, or Sanskrit or Chinese or

English. What is in the heart is the important thing. There is a very deep meaning in the refuges and they can be explained in several ways, but each of these several ways only adds to the meaning and makes them have more value for us. Here is the commonest translation into English:

I TAKE MY REFUGE IN THE BUDDHA
I TAKE MY REFUGE IN THE DHARMA
I TAKE MY REFUGE IN THE SANGHA

but we find that these refuges mean a lot more to us if we think about this other translation:

I GO FOR GUIDANCE TO THE PERFECTLY ENLIGHTENED ONE
I GO FOR GUIDANCE TO HIS HOLY TEACHINGS
I GO FOR GUIDANCE TO HIS HOLY ORDER OF DISCIPLES.

Still another way of adding deep meaning to the refuges is to think of them in this way:

I FIND THE TRUTH IN LORD BUDDHA
I FIND THE TRUTH IN HIS DOCTRINES
I FIND THE TRUTH IN HIS HOLY BROTHERHOOD

Always we must remember that no matter how right the words may be, they have no real meaning that is of value to us, unless what we have in our hearts is right. A person who lives far from any Buddhist land and who has never even seen a wearer of the yellow robe, can become a true follower of the Lord Buddha simply by having a real desire in his heart to be the Buddha's true disciple and follow the Dharma-teachings.

The Buddha is our teacher, the Dharma is medicine for unhappiness by showing us how to overcome the cause of unhappiness and the Sangha is our friend. Every Buddhist boy and girl ought to know some form of devotion to use every day, especially on waking up and at bedtime. Anyone can easily learn the Three Refuges and they make an excellent devotion for anyone, young or old, to be used at any time of the day or night, but all over the Buddhist world, it is rather generally agreed that it is a wise and holy plan to start the day with thoughts of "the Three Jewels", as the Three Refuges are often called, and also to make them our last thought before we go to sleep. Even though this devotion is a short one, it really covers the entire Buddhist teaching, if we stop to consider that the Buddha is our supreme teacher and guide through life, the Dharma is the teaching He left us to be our "road map" on our way through the world, and the Sangha, or Brotherhood of Monks, represents the keeper of the Dharma and is our friend.

Once, a long time ago in Korea, there was a poor family that made its living by cutting wood in a great forest and making charcoal. There were two small children in this family, a boy and a girl. They helped their parents to make charcoal and, although their life was a hard one, they were happy. But one day sickness came to their hut and the mother and father were both unable to get out of bed. The sickness continued for many days and soon there was no food in the house and the parents were greatly worried. It was many miles over rough mountain trails to the nearest neighbour where help could be obtained. At last when there was not even a grain of rice and no medicine at all in their little hut, the parents decided to send the two children to seek help. They carefully taught them how to follow the path over the steep mountains and, before they left, the family paid its devotions to the Lord Buddha. They began and ended their devotions with the Three Refuges. Then the two little children set out to get help for their sick parents. Finally, after many long hours of walking and when they were very tired, they reached the village and told their story. The kind people of the village gave them rice and medicines and an old woman offered to go back with them to nurse the two sick parents. When they were about halfway back home, there suddenly appeared before them a fierce robber, sword in hand, threatening to kill them. The old woman was so frightened that she ran off and hid herself. The little children were frightened too, but they were too small to run very far, so they fell on their knees and recited the Three Refuges. When the robber heard this devotion he threw away his sword and began to weep. Suddenly he remembered when he was a happy little boy his mother had taught him the refuges. This thought changed his heart and he decided to become a good and honest man. He found the poor frightened old woman and then he helped her and the children to take the heavy bags of rice and the medicines to their hut. He remained and helped to cut wood and make charcoal until the parents were well. Later on, this one time fierce robber entered a monastery in the Diamond Mountains of Korea and, in his old age, became famous for the holiness of his life. To this day there is a huge granite stone with these words engraved on it: "In memory of the robber who became a saint." But let us remember that all this good came about because the little children knew how to utter the Three Refuges.

THE BLESSED REFUGES

O, Blessed One! the greatest of mankind
Thou gracious Master, filled with love divine.
Glorious Thy life, so sweet, so great, so pure,
Thou mighty Light, Thou Blessed One so dear.

Lord, at Thy feet I seat myself to learn
The wisdom of Thy Life and Law.
Plainly I see the Truth which Thou dost teach;
Sorrow and pain and self shall be no more.

Into my heart there comes a lasting peace;
Within my mind there glows a wondrous Light.
All tears and sorrow, doubts and worries cease,
For Truth and Joy Thy Glorious Teaching brings.

I take my refuge in The Glorious Lord,
No other shelter shall I need,
I take my refuge in the Law and Sangha,
Which freedom bring and Light forevermore.

— S. Sogaku.

THE ETERNAL REFUGES

How glorious is Thy Dharma,
O, Buddha, Blessed Lord,
How wonderful Thy Sangha,
That spreads Thy word abroad.

We, too, will surely follow
The road that Thou didst find,
The perfect Road of Knowledge
And never look behind.

And, walking in Thy footsteps,
We'll find the truest wealth
Lies in the full surrender
Of that we call the self.

Thine Infinite Compassion,
Thy pure and holy life,
At length shall lead the nations
From bloodshed, hate and strife.

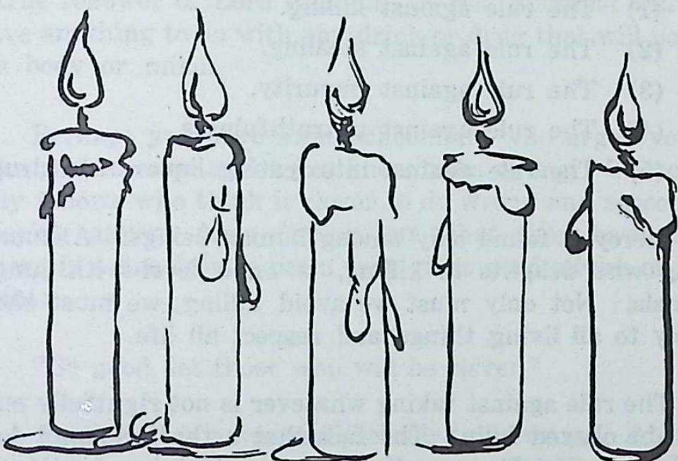
And so we take our refuge
In Thee, our Lord Benign,
Thy Holy Law the beacon
That in our hearts shall shine.

How glorious is Thy Dharma,
O Buddha, Blessed Lord;
How wonderful Thy Sangha,
That spreads Thy word abroad.

— The Venerable E. K. S. Hunt.

QUESTIONS

1. How many refuges are there?
2. What are they?
3. What do they mean?
4. Can you say them in Sanskrit or Pali?
5. Can you say them in any other languages?
6. By what other name do we sometimes call the Three Refuges?
7. Which is more important, the words we say or what we have in our hearts?
8. Were the charcoal burners good Buddhists?
9. What did they teach their children to say?
10. Why did the robber change into a Saint?



THE FIVE PRECEPTS

There can be no success in getting happiness out of Lord Buddha's Dharma until we understand and use *Sila,* which is a Pali-Sanskrit word meaning *morality*. The Five Precepts are often called *Pancasila,* which means "the Five Moralities" or "the Five Rules of Good Conduct". No matter how clever we may be at learning and understanding even the deepest teaching of Buddhism, we cannot call ourselves true followers of Lord Buddha until we follow the five "do nots".

As a rule, these five rules are recited after the Three Refuges and are usually considered as a necessary part of the ceremony of becoming a Buddhist. Every one who understands these rules knows it is good and wise to follow them all, but many persons have weak characters and do not make a real attempt to be guided by these Five Rules that all *Buddhists must* follow. They are:—

(1) The rule against killing.
(2) The rule against stealing.
(3) The rule against impurity.
(4) The rule against untruthfulness.
(5) The rule against intoxicating liquors and drugs.

Mercy is found only among human beings. A human being who delights in killing, is on a level with jungle animals. Not only must we avoid killing, we must show mercy to all living things and respect all life.

The rule against taking whatever is not rightfully ours must be obeyed fully. The fact that a theft is small does not excuse it. Every wrong act we do has an unhappy result. One of the worst results of breaking any or all of these five rules is that we do not only lose the respect of others, but we also lose self-respect.

The rule against impurity tells us that we must respect our bodies and not make improper use of them. Human beings know the difference between right and wrong and this places on us an obligation to behave ourselves in a way that is very different from animal conduct.

As for the rule against untruthfulness, perhaps this is the rule that is broken most of all. Once a person gets a reputation for being a liar, no one is willing to trust that individual anymore. Lying is also one of the very quickest ways to lose self-respect. The Buddha said: "He whose words are truthful and kind is loved and respected by all and, when he passes from this world, he is sadly missed."

No Buddhist can make or sell intoxicating drinks or evil drugs. Anyone who engages in such a business is not a true follower of Lord Buddha. A real Buddhist will not have anything to do with any drink or drug that will poison his body or mind.

Perhaps you have some schoolmate who urges you to take part in some action you know to be wrong. There are silly fellows who think it clever to do wrong and succeed in keeping anyone from finding out what they have done. There is a line from a poem that gives good advice on this point:

"Be good, let those who will be clever."

Actually it is never really clever to do wrong. Any boy or girl who observes the Five Precepts faithfully will be happy. If these precepts are observed all through life, then much sorrow will be avoided. Last of all, let us all remember that no one, boy or girl, man or woman, young or old, can be a real Buddhist unless he uses the Five Precepts as the guide to daily moral living.

OUR BLESSED MASTER

The Blessed Master teaches
That children must be true,
In every thought and every word,
In every act they do.

The Holy Master teaches
All children must be pure,
If they would walk His Pathway,
And happiness secure.

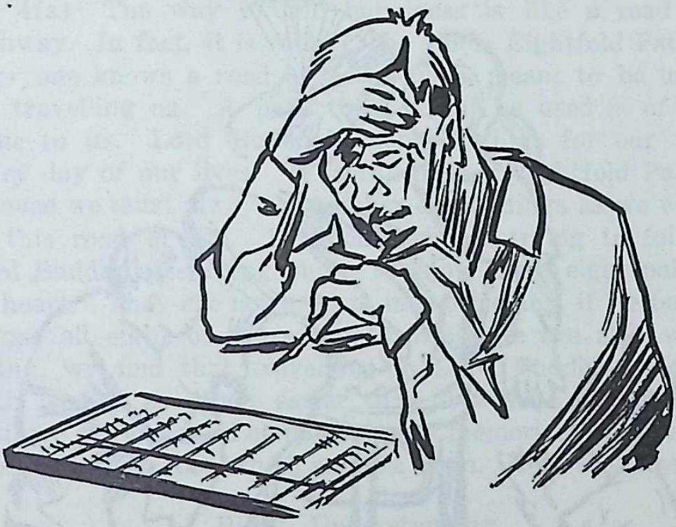
The Gentle Master teaches
That all must surely bring,
Tender care and kindness
To every living thing.

Our Blessed Master teaches
Each child must slay within,
The ugly selfish longing
That leads to acts of sin.

— D. Hunt.

QUESTIONS

1. What does *Sila* mean?
2. What does *Morality* mean?
3. What is a precept?
4. How many precepts are there for laymen?
5. Name the precepts.
6. Do animals show mercy?
7. We lose two kinds of respect if we do not keep the Five Precepts. What are they?
8. It is wrong for a Buddhist to use alcohol or evil drugs, but can a Buddhist sell such things to others?
9. Is it really clever to do wrong?
10. Must we wait until we are grown-ups to follow the Five Precepts, or can children follow them, too?



THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

All our Buddhist religion is based on what we call "The Four Noble Truths." In plain language they are:—

1. All life knows sorrow (unhappiness).
2. This sorrow has a cause.
3. Sorrow can be brought to an end.
4. The way to bring sorrow to an end.

1(a) Even a baby knows sorrow. If the baby is hungry or thirsty or too warm or too cold, it cries. That is its way of expressing unhappiness. Children at play soon find there is no game that does not have some disappointment. If there are winners, then there must be losers. No one can be a winner always. Sooner or later we are all losers in one way or another. When we are sick, that is sorrow. When we are disappointed, that is

sorrow. There are so many ways to be unhappy. Even when we are happy we know that the happiness will not last forever.

2(a) Nothing happens by accident. There is a reason for everything. The cause of sorrow is our ignorance which leads to stupid desires. By "ignorance" we mean not knowing the true nature of life and not understanding the right way to live.

3(a) Sorrow (unhappiness) can be brought to an end. Lord Buddha taught us that whatever has a beginning must also have an ending. Until the Buddha came to teach us how to become free from ignorance, no one knew the real cause of unhappiness or how to overcome it. The way to overcome sorrow and find true happiness is found in the fourth point.

4(a) The way to find happiness is like a road or pathway. In fact, it is called "The Noble Eightfold Path." Everyone knows a road or pathway is meant to be used for travelling on. A path that cannot be used is of no value to us. Lord Buddha's Noble Path is for our use every day of our lives. It is called the "Eightfold Path" because we must always remember eight things as we walk on this road of life. Everyone who is trying to follow Lord Buddha's teaching ought to know these eight points by heart. They are not hard to memorise and, if we begin to use all eight of these points while we are still very young, we find that travelling on Lord Buddha's Noble Path is ever so much easier than it will be if we wait until we are older. Let us all try to memorise these eight points, to understand them and use them. Here they are:—

1. Right Understanding.
2. Right Aims.
3. Right Speech.
4. Right Actions.
5. Right Livelihood.
6. Right Effort.
7. Right Mindfulness.
8. Right Meditation.

Once, a long time ago, there was a caravan route over a large desert. By day the sands were so hot that they were like burning charcoal. There was no water to drink and there were sharp stones and thorns to hurt the feet of those who strayed off the right path. Wise travellers carried with them plenty of water and food and always employed a very experienced guide who knew the right path and could lead the caravans safely through all the many dangers of the desert.

But a certain foolish traveller decided to cross the dangerous desert without a guide. Soon he strayed off the right path. The sharp stones cut his feet, the thorns scratched his body and he and his camels soon drank up all their water. Just when they were almost dead from thirst, heat and injury, they were rescued by wise travellers who had followed a good guide.

The desert is this world, the dangers are the troubles and sorrows that come to all of us. The good guide is the Lord Buddha, and the safe road across the desert is the Noble Eightfold Path.

THE SONG OF PEACE

Praise ye the Dharma of our Lord,
Which bids all hatred cease.
That sheds upon us holy showers
Of joy and love and peace.

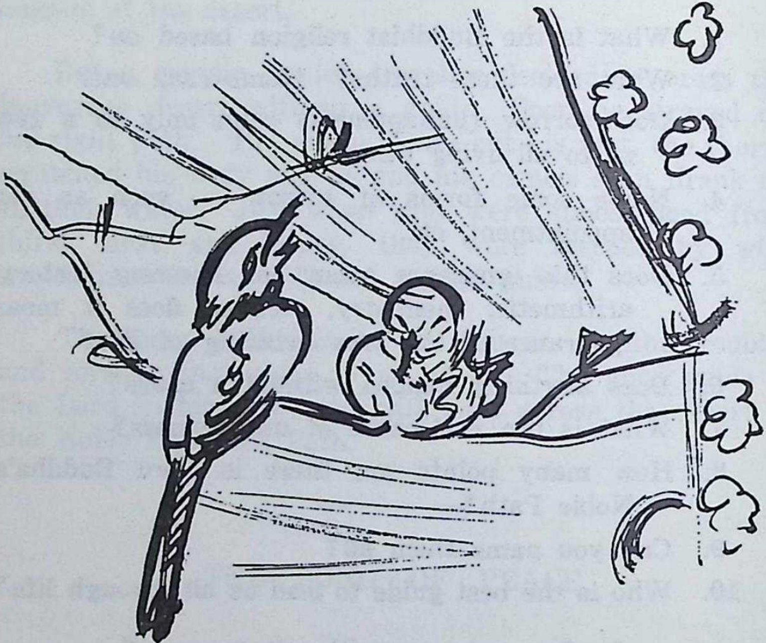
Walk in the Noble Eight-fold Path
The Path our Teacher found
That leads the weary sons of earth
To peace and hope profound.

Within the Sangha we shall rest
And in our Master's Name,
Who showed the suffering ones of earth
The secret of their pain.

— D. Hunt.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the Buddhist religion based on?
2. What are these truths? Name each one.
3. Does sorrow (unhappiness) come only to a few, or to all living things?
4. Name some forms of sorrow — such as disappointment, etc.
5. Does this ignorance mean not knowing history, arithmetic, chemistry, etc., or does it mean ignorance of the true meaning of life?
6. Does anything happen without a cause?
7. What is the real cause of unhappiness?
8. How many points are there in Lord Buddha's Noble Path?
9. Can you name them all?
10. Who is the best guide to lead us all through life?



RIGHT UNDERSTANDING

Now that we have memorised the eight points of the Buddha's Noble Path, let us try to gain a good clear idea of what each of these points means. First of all, we ought to find out what is meant by "Right". In the case of the first point, Right Understanding, we can say Right Understanding means correct understanding, the best understanding, understanding that is true, understanding that is not half-true, half-false, but is the very best and most complete understanding we can get. If it is less than our best, then it is not *Right* understanding. This means that each one of us must try hard to get a really good understanding of the Buddha's Path. If we fail to make a good start, then we are like the man lost in the desert.

Let us pretend we have just bought a motor-car and have filled the tank with petrol. The tyres are new and the motor car has plenty of oil. We have a road map and know very well where we wish to go. There is only one thing to keep us from starting our trip at once. We do not know how to drive and, until we gain the proper understanding of how to drive, the car is useless to us. If we try to drive without knowing how, we place ourselves in great danger. It is also like this with the Eightfold Path. Unless we first get Right Understanding we cannot make *Right* use of the other seven points.

In the *Dharmapada* the Lord Buddha said, "All that we are is the result of our thoughts." Good understanding and good thinking go together. They are like twins that are never separated. Just as it is dangerous to try to drive a motor-car without first understanding how to drive, it is quite as dangerous to use the other seven points without first of all getting Right Understanding. Without good use of the mind there will be silly speech, foolish actions, wrong effort, and nothing but trouble for us. A bad beginning usually has a bad ending. The only good way to make a sensible start on Lord Buddha's Path is to make a *Right* start by trying hard to get Right Understanding.

Once a certain man owned a mango orchard and took great delight when the fruit was ripe. He was very fond of eating sweet fruits and often ate so many mangoes that he had severe stomach-pains. He kept a blue bottle filled with a powerful medicine and, whenever he suffered from eating too many mangoes, he took medicine from the blue bottle. One day his servant noticed that the bottle was almost empty. He needed a bottle in which to place some poisonous fluid he used to cure sores on horses, so he took the empty bottle and filled it with the horse medicine. Some time later on, the owner of the mango grove ate too many mangoes and, feeling stomach-pains, went in search for his blue bottle.

The bottle was not in its usual place but, after long searching, he found it. To his surprise the bottle was full, yet the last time he had seen it, it was almost empty. When he poured some medicine into a spoon he saw that the colour was different and, when he tasted the medicine, there was a very different flavour. Yet, just because the medicine was in the blue bottle, he took a large dose, and soon he was sick almost to the point of dying. We see from the foolish actions of the mango grove owner how dangerous it is to do anything at all unless first we understand what we are doing. The Buddha taught us to see clearly and think carefully. If we do this, then we shall gain good understanding. Remember we cannot make good use of the Buddha's Path until we have obtained Right Understanding.

RIGHT UNDERSTANDING

You who will to know
In the truth shall grow
And to fullest knowledge win
By the Light within.

Unto humankind
Is the task assigned
All by reason's power to test
And to choose the best.

Reason's steadfast glow
Doth the pathway show
Out of error's woe and night
Unto wisdom's height.

Cease from base desire,
Ardently aspire
Pure in mind to be
From all evil free.

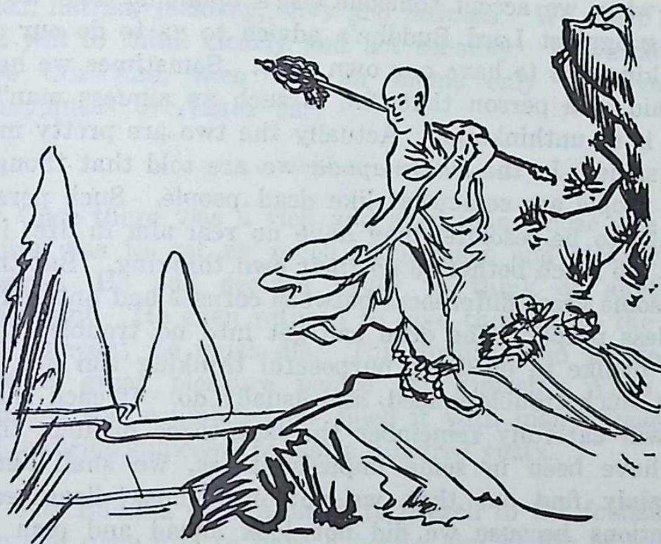
Then shall reason's ray
Merge in truth's bright day,
And in full enlightenment
You shall find content.

— A. R. Zorn.

QUESTIONS

1. If our understanding is half-false, half-true, is it "*Right* Understanding"?
2. What happens if we try to drive a motor car without knowing how to drive?
3. What happens if we try to go through life without understanding how to live?
4. Does a bad beginning usually have a good ending?
5. Can we have Right Action if we do not have Right Understanding?
6. Was the man who owned the mango grove wise or foolish?

7. Did his trouble come from "bad luck" or bad understanding?
8. What are the other seven points on the Eightfold Path?
9. In the poem at the end of the lesson, what is meant by "the power of reason"?
10. Is Right Understanding something that even boys and girls can get if they really try to think clearly?



RIGHT AIMS

As we learned in the preceding lesson, good understanding and good thinking go together like twins that are never separated. But, to Buddhists, the use of the word *thought* in connection with our religion has a very special meaning. We are all familiar with what is meant when someone says "I have made up my mind." We know he has decided what he wants to do and is determined to do it. We can not gain Right Understanding without thinking that is resolute, that has Right Aim. Buddhists who wish to get the most out of the Dharma of the Blessed One must have their minds made up to get Right Understanding and to use that understanding in their daily lives.

We may have good beliefs without having good understanding that has come from rightly aimed thought, but when we accept someone else's opinions, then we are going against Lord Buddha's advice to us to do our own thinking and to have our own aims. Sometimes we heard it said of a person that "he is such an aimless man" or "he is so unthinking." Actually the two are pretty much the same. In the *Dharmapada* we are told that thoughtless people are somewhat like dead people. Such persons dislike to be resolute, they have no real aim in life; it is just too much bother to do their own thinking. But there are some great differences between corpses and unthinking, aimless people. The dead can get into no trouble; those who dislike to do clear, purposeful thinking can get into very much trouble indeed, and usually do. If each one of us will carefully remember the last three or four times we have been in some unpleasantness, we shall almost certainly find out that we got into those disagreeable situations because we did not look ahead and plan and think before we acted.

There is an old saying that is found in many languages and it is good advice for all of us: "Look before you leap." It would be much better advice if worded: "Look *and think* before you leap." Our Buddhist religion teaches us that each one of us has the kind of life he makes for himself. If we have no real resolution, no well-planned aim in life, and do but little thinking, then the result can only be a life full of confusion and unhappiness. It is only stupidity to blame our unhappiness on "bad luck." In order to have a life that is full of satisfaction and is worthwhile, we must resolutely make sure that we do our best possible thinking with the best possible aim. The best way to make a good start in this direction is to free the mind from all the dark and ugly thoughts that ought to be a source of shame to anyone, young or old. For example, we must cleanse our minds of anger, ill-will, greed, hatred, jealousy, envy and laziness. We must have real will to think clearly and act sensibly. If we do not have this aim, then we can blame only ourselves if unhappiness overtakes us.

Once there was a rich and aged man whose sole aim in life was to get as much excitement and pleasure as possible. He had decided never to think of anything unpleasant. He even refused to give thought to the fact that someday he must die. This foolish man decided to build a great pleasure palace for himself. When the mansion was completed, he filled it with many treasures and luxuries sufficient to last a hundred years.

The Buddha sent Ananda to preach to the foolish old man and urge him to have a better aim in life and to do better thinking. But the rich old man would not listen. In his stupidity he had convinced himself he would never die. His aim was wrong and so his thinking was wrong. Shortly after Ananda left, the old man died suddenly. When this news was brought to the Buddha, the Lord said: "A fool, even though the wise instruct him, understands nothing of wisdom, because he has only foolish and selfish thoughts. Just as a spoon cannot taste soup, even so those whose minds are filled with wrong thoughts can never know how to get free from sorrow."

RIGHT THOUGHT

Right thought will lead me on
To wisdom's holy height,
And show to me the surest way
To pass through sorrow's night.

Right thought will light me through
The shadows of this life;
'Twill ease my heart and peace assure
And free my mind from strife.

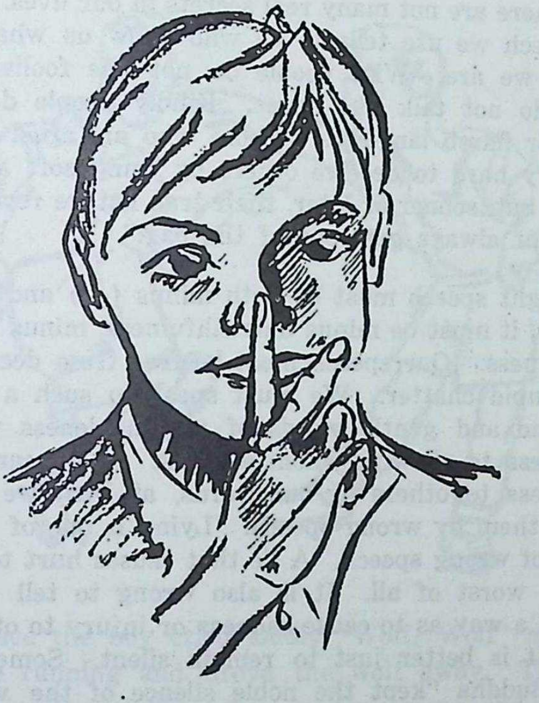
Right thought will be my guide
Across life's troubled sea;
My pilot, compass, star and chart,
Right thought shall ever be.

Right thought will keep me on
The way to perfect peace,
And ferry to the other shore
Where all illusions cease.

— Sumangalo.

QUESTIONS

1. Can we have Right Understanding if we do not like purposeful thinking?
2. Is it well to do our own thinking, or ought we to depend on the thinking of others?
3. What does the *Dharmapada* (one of the Buddhist scriptures) say about people who do not like to think?
4. Can you remember an ancient saying about leaping?
5. What does this saying mean?
6. Does unhappiness come from bad thinking, or "bad luck?"
7. What kind of thoughts must we put out of our minds?
8. When we act stupidly ought we to be — (a) proud? (b) ashamed? or (c) full of excuses?
9. Can the spoon taste the soup?
10. Can stupid thinking bring wise action?



RIGHT SPEECH

It is not always easy to understand the Eightfold Path when we take the points one by one. Speech and action often go together. They show to all who know us what is going on in our minds. For this lesson, however, we shall consider only speech, and leave action in its usual fourth place. But as we go on with trying to understand the meaning of Right Speech, we ought to take note of the fact that Right Action follows immediately after Right Speech. There is a close connection between the two.

There are not many real secrets in our lives. The kind of speech we use tells to all who know us what kind of people we are. Wise people do not use foolish speech; fools do not talk like sages. Kindly people do not use cruel or harsh language. Those who are cruel by nature may try hard to deceive others by using soft and kindly speech but, sooner or later, their true nature reveals itself. "The cat always gets out of the bag."

Right speech must be both minus (—) and plus (+). That is, it must be minus untruthfulness, minus anger and all ugliness. Our speech must be free from deceit, gossip and stupid chatter. We must speak in such a way that our kind and gentle words of reasonableness will bring happiness to all with whom we talk. If we cannot bring happiness to others by our words, at least we must not injure them by wrong speech. Lying is one of the worst forms of wrong speech. A lie that causes hurt to someone else is worst of all. It is also wrong to tell the truth in such a way as to cause sadness or injury to others. At times it is better just to remain silent. Sometimes the Lord Buddha "kept the noble silence of the wise." He showed us, by His example, that silence is sometimes better than speech, even truthful speech.

Once, a long time ago, a certain village was greatly troubled by a wolf that came from its hiding place in the forest and ate the villagers' sheep. It was necessary to keep a constant watch for the wolf so that the men of the village could come with sticks and drive away the fierce animal whenever the watchers called out "Wolf! Wolf!".

One day a boy was given the duty of watching the sheep. Soon he saw the wolf coming out of the forest

and, at once the boy cried loudly "Wolf, Wolf" and the men came running and drove the wolf away. The boy greatly enjoyed watching this exciting scene and wished tc see it again. He waited a little while and then gave the alarm again. The villagers came running, but there was no wolf. They scolded the boy and warned him not to give a false alarm again. But his desire for excitement got the better of him, and soon he sounded another false alarm. All the men came running with sticks ready to beat the wolf away, but there was no wolf. Once more they scolded the boy and then went back to their work.

Later on that same day, the wolf came out of the forest and the boy cried "Wolf! Wolf!", but no one came to drive away the animal. No one believed the boy was telling the truth. The wolf killed many of the sheep and caused great loss to the villagers. In many lands there is an ancient proverb that is good for all of us to remember, "A liar is not believed when he tells the truth".

RIGHT SPEECH

Let Truth upon thy lips
Its seal impress
To guard thee from deceit
And false excess.

Let Purity pervade
Thine every word,
Lest that which may defile
from thee be heard.

Let Love unto thy voice
Its music lend,
Then shalt thou gladden all
And none offend.

Let Wisdom thee restrain
Lest thou betray,
Or idle tales repeat
To cause dismay.

Thus let Right Speech reveal
In every hour
The Buddha-life within,
Thy guiding power.

— A. R. Zorn.

QUESTIONS

1. Is a person's speech a good way to judge his character?

2. Do wise men talk like fools?
   Do fools talk like wise men?

3. What is meant by the old Chinese saying, "An empty pot makes the most noise?"

4. If a person is known to be a liar, do people believe him when he tells the truth?

5. What was wrong about the conduct of the boy sent to watch for the wolf?

6. Can a few words of wrong speech cause much damage?

7. If a person lies, gossips and speaks only in a foolish way, can we believe this person has good character?

8. Are habits easy to form? Is it easy to get into bad habits with our speech?

9. If we hurt someone by thoughtless speech, what ought we to do?

10. Should we begin to use Right Speech early in life or when we are old?

RIGHT ACTION

When we speak of action we always mean *doing* Our conduct, our behaviour, our deeds, everything that we do, must be such that we can properly call each act "Right Action".

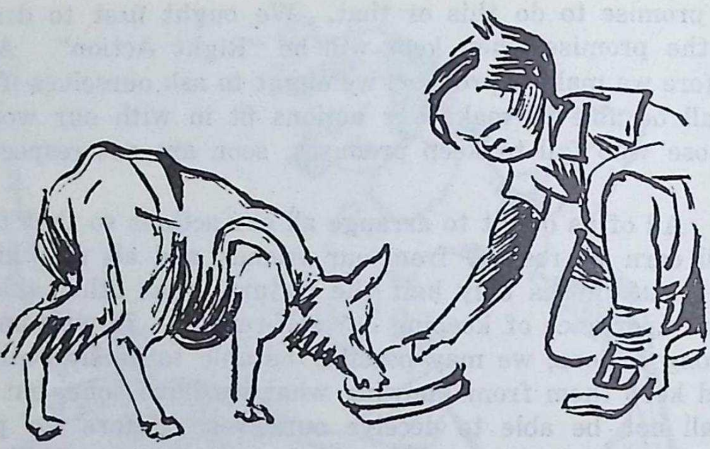
There is an ancient proverb that says: "Actions speak louder than words". Good words ought to be coupled with good deeds. No matter how cleverly we may try always to speak in a good way, we shall fail to disguise our true nature unless our acts are the same as our words.

Every boy and girl ought to learn quite early in life that promises are sacred things. We must not be too quick to promise to do this or that. We ought first to decide if the promise when kept will be "Right Action". Also, before we make a promise, we ought to ask ourselves if we shall be able to make our actions fit in with our words. Those who fail to keep promises, soon are not respected.

All of us ought to arrange all our actions so that they will earn us respect from our friends and all who know us. But this is only half the picture. The other side is the importance of keeping our self-respect. If we commit wrong actions, we may possibly be able to deceive others and keep them from knowing what we have done, but we shall not be able to deceive ourselves. Before we plan any course of action, we ought first to think carefully to see if it will bring us joy or sorrow. If we think and act wisely and well, then we shall not need to feel shame for our conduct. Wise thought coupled with wise action bring us the respect of others and keep us from ever losing our self-respect.

So many *say* they believe Lord Buddha's Teachings. But when we look at their actions, we wonder if they are telling the truth, because their deeds do not fit in with their words. We must always remember that Lord Buddha's religion is something *to do*, not just something to talk about.

Among the Tamil people of India, there is a legend about a holy man who became known all over India as a famous teacher and preacher. Thousands of pilgrims came to learn from him. He showed kindness to all, regardless of rank. The goodness of his heart was shown by his actions. Everyone who came to visit this great and holy teacher went away feeling that he had received deep instruction. Yet this great teacher and preacher had never



in his life been able to utter even one word. He had been born dumb. The examples he set by his actions was the only sermon he could preach. "Good people shine from afar, like the snowy mountains; bad people are not seen, like arrows shot by night."

RIGHT ACTION

Firm in our purpose we have set
  Our feet in Wisdom's Way,
Nor shall the transient things of earth
  Our resolution sway.

We spurn the lure of fame or gold,
  The lust for things of sense,
And find purity and peace
  Our ample recompense.

Unselfish love to all that live
  Our lives shall manifest,
In thought, in word, in action show
  Its inspiration blest.

Though steep and toilsome be the path,
We shall but strive the more
Nirvana's holy realm to gain
And peace forevermore.

— A. R. Zorn.

THE CUNNING OLD HERON

There was an old heron who lived near the edge of a large fish pond. The heron, being old, was too lazy to find food, and so he thought of a trick that would help him get easy food. It happened that a giant crab also lived in the pond, and while the heron was resting in the pond, thinking about the plan, the crab asked him why he was so quiet. The cunning heron replied that he was very sorry that a fisherman would soon be catching all the fish inside the pond. This news reached the ears of the king of the fish, who then asked the heron what the remedy was. To this the heron replied that the only way out was to carry all the fish to another pond. The king thanked him for the excellent answer and also added he needed his help in carrying all the fish to another pond.

The heron was all the time hoping for the king to say this, and immediately he caught some fish in his bill and carried them to a dry stone slab far away, where he ate them. This went on for several days until finally the giant crab asked the heron to carry him, too. When they reached the stone slab, the crab saw a pile of fish bones and he at once knew the trick. He then asked the heron to put him down and as soon as he was free, he caught hold of the heron's neck with his powerful nippers and killed him after telling him that his wrongful acts had to be stopped. It can clearly be seen that all wrong actions will have bad results, thus proving the truth of the old saying, "You will reap what you have sown".

QUESTIONS

1. What does the word "Action" mean?
2. What ancient proverb tells us about actions and words?
3. Is it wise to make a promise without first thinking about it?
4. What happens if our actions are not the same as our speech?
5. What do we mean by "self respect"?
6. Is Lord Buddha's teaching a religion of doing—or is it just believing?
7. What is a pilgrim?
8. Why did so many pilgrims come to visit the teacher who was dumb?
9. Does wrong action bring happiness or unhappiness?
10. One of the mottos of the Boy Scouts is: "Think before you act". If we follow this advice, will it help us to be happy?

RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

We can not fully understand this point of the Noble Eightfold Path unless we realize how closely Right thought and Right Action go together, because earning our living requires both thought and action. Every boy and girl ought to give serious thought to selecting the way they plan to earn their livelihood when they grow up. There are many important points to think about.

First of all, we ought to try to choose an occupation likely to be a source of helpfulness and happiness to others. For example, a young person who wishes to study to be a doctor, is planning a life-work that will be a blessing to many. His work will ease human suffering. This sort of work is considered by Buddhists to be very meritorious.

Those who grow food or build houses, make roads and bridges, work in the postal service or any other occupation that is of real value to the human race, are all earning Right Livelihood.

No sincere Buddhist will work at any occupation that causes misery or suffering in any form. The slaughtering of animals, the sale of animal flesh, the manufacture or sale of alcohol or stupefying drugs, trade in deadly weapons or in promoting gambling or low pleasures, all are forbidden to true Buddhists. There are many trades and occupations from which we may select our way of earning our living. If our choice of occupation is not especially helpful to others, at least we must make sure that it will not be harmful to any one.

In addition to the main meaning in this fifth point on Lord Buddha's Path, there are lesser meanings. For example, many boys and girls, as well as older people, have hobbies. We must make sure that anything we do is harmless to others. If a hobby will bring happiness to others, then it is a very good hobby indeed. To grow flowers brings happiness to the grower as well as to all who see the beautiful blossoms. If the owner of the garden shares his flowers with the sick, the aged and those whose hearts are troubled, then he has a very meritorious hobby.

Now, let's take a look at another kind of occupation or pastime. Let us imagine a man who delights in shooting wild creatures. Perhaps he sells their flesh and thus gains a living for himself. Or he may kill only because he enjoys such a cruel hobby. Such an occupation or pastime is not one that a genuine Buddhist can follow. Those who cause pain or unhappiness to others, even to animals, will sooner or later find much unhappiness in their own lives.

There was a young man in north Malaya who lived in a village that is partially surrounded by forests. In these forests there are many birds, wild-boars and game-animals.

This young man happened to be very skilful at hunting with a rifle and he took much pride in that fact, boasting to his fellowmen, showing them the heads of the boars and animals he had killed and which he kept as trophies. Once on a public holiday, he gathered five of his friends to go hunting. When they were about to go, his cousin, a lay-preacher, arrived from a neighbouring village. He came up to this young man and said, "I heard that you are quite a marksman and very good at hunting". "Yes, I am," came the reply. "You should see my trophies of animal heads," he continued with a rather proud air.

The preacher then asked him, "Think about it, why should intelligent men like you go hunting and putting an end to animals' lives"?

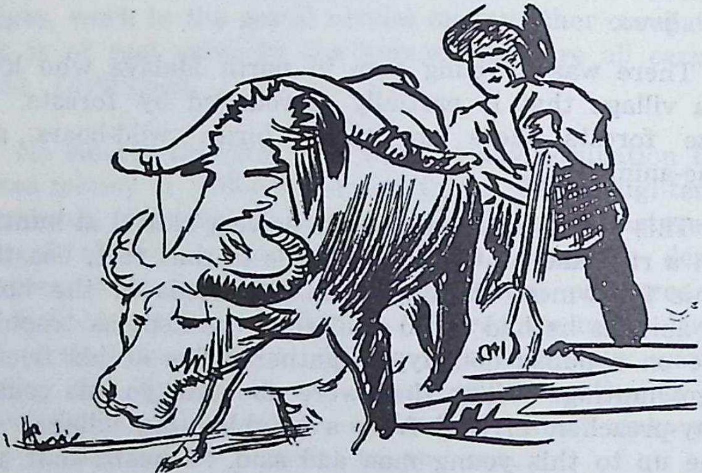
"Well I get the honour of being a good hunter, don't I? Besides I enjoy hunting."

"I see. Suppose you don't know how to handle a gun, and you are just as ignorant at hunting, would you have the urge to hunt as you have now"?

"No, of course not. It would not be sensible."

"You are right. Then it will follow that the animals will not be as endangered as they are now, won't it? Well, I see no reason for you to endanger them now."

"I quite agree, but I do desire to hunt. It's just that I enjoy it."



"That is the main trouble, young man. Your desire for enjoyment at the expense of others' sorrow, pain and death just cannot be fair, can it? Don't you think that it is rather cruel and selfish on your part? If you think of it thus: You kill the animals to satisfy your desire, and it brings you further satisfaction in your friends' praise of your skill, what have you done that is really worthy of a reward to be given you by Right Thinking men who have Right Living? You can surely see that there is nothing worthy in your ability to shoot and bag game, other than the praises showered upon you by thoughtless men, and you will be further obsessed with your desire, so that you will be blinded to the fundamentals of Right Livelihood. So why not live and let live"?

"You are so right. Up till now, my friends and I have not realised that fact and we have been hunting and killing just to satisfy our own desire. It is good that you opened our eyes for us."

Thus saying the young man and his friends hung up their guns and abandoned their hunting, promising not to hunt any more, and to concentrate on Right Livelihood. The lay preacher proceeded to another village with the satisfaction that he has opened his cousin's and friends' eyes to practical use of the Buddha's doctrines.

STEADFASTNESS

Tread thou the path of rectitude
The precepts five observe,
Lest base desire or lure of gain
Thy resolution swerve.

Let love thy spirit dominate
And let thine heart be kind,
That all in sorrow, pain or need
A friend in thee may find.

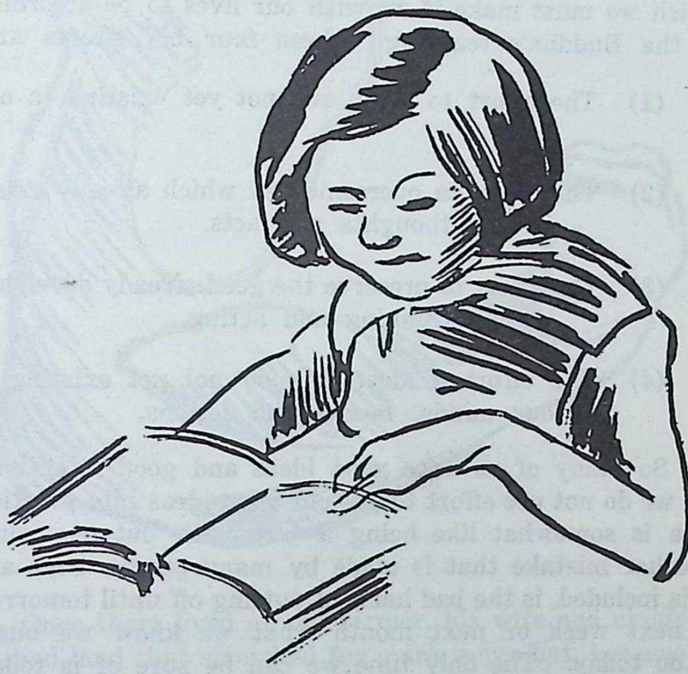
Pure in thy thought, thy word and deed,
So let thy life be spent,
And thou shalt make thy progress sure
To full enlightenment.

— A. R. Zorn.

QUESTIONS

1. Does livelihood mean —
   (a) earning our living?
   (b) doing good deeds?
   (c) not doing evil?
   Which one of these is the right answer?

2. Ought we to select our trade or profession early in life or late?
3. What kind of work ought we to select?
4. Name some ways of earning a living that Buddhists consider good ways?
5. What are some bad ways of earning a living?
6. Can a man who sells whisky or opium be called a true Buddhist?
7. What is a hobby? Do *you* have a hobby?
8. Name some good hobbies and some bad ones.
9. If our way of earning a livelihood harms anyone, is that *Right* Livelihood?
10. When we are not working and have spare time, what are some good ways to use that spare time?



RIGHT EFFORT

None of the points of the Noble Path has any real meaning if it is not joined to effort. Even the finest motor-car is useless if there is no petrol in the tank. The petrol is the energy that makes the car run. Another name for Right Effort is Right Energy. If this sixth point is missing, then the other points of the path have no life in them. When Right Effort is missing in anyone's life, we use an unpleasant word to describe that condition. The word is *Laziness*. If we do not overcome laziness, we cannot make any real progress on the road to happiness.

Each of us must make real effort to lead a good, moral helpful life. Usually we say there are four main efforts which we must make if we wish our lives to be according to the Buddha's teaching. These four big efforts are:

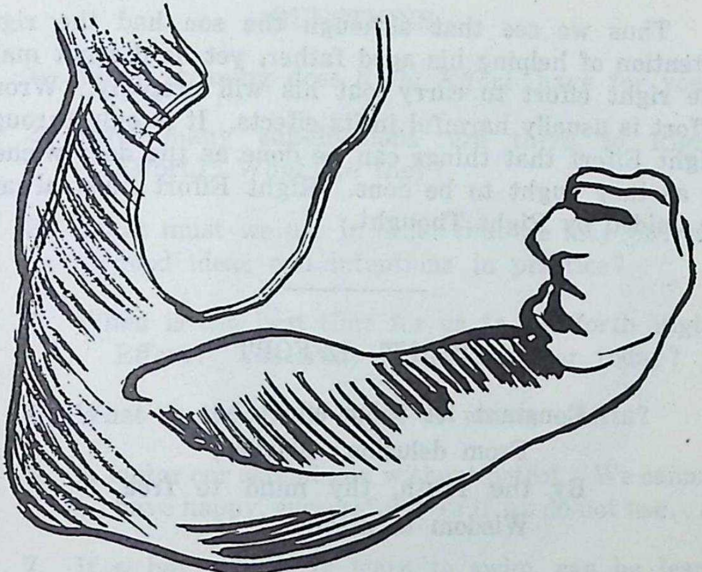
(1) The effort to avoid evil not yet existing in our lives.

(2) The effort to overcome evil which already exists in our thoughts and acts.

(3) The effort to preserve the good already developed in our thinking and acting.

(4) The effort to develop good not yet existing in our minds, hearts and actions.

So many of us have good ideas and good intentions, but we do not use effort to put our good ideas into practice. This is somewhat like being a bird with but one wing. Another mistake that is made by many people, boys and girls included, is the bad habit of putting off until tomorrow or next week or next month what we know we ought to do today. The only time we can be sure of is today. Yesterday has gone and tomorrow has not come. The best time to begin to put forth Right Effort is this very day. The sooner we practise all the points of the Eightfold Path, the sooner we shall find real happiness. Boys and girls who start to follow this pathway very early in life will soon find out that it is the only road to true and lasting happiness. But nothing can be done until a start is made. A boy who sits on the beach and looks at the water, wishing he knew how to swim, will never know until he makes an effort to swim. Another way of naming Right Effort is Right *Trying*. No one can get happiness or any good thing out of life until he really *tries*. Let us all try to use our best efforts to be happy and actually use Lord Buddha's teachings in our daily lives.



Once there lived an old farmer, his wife and children. He had land that stretched for many acres but, because of his old age, the vast area was left to grow into a forest. Trees that shot up sky-high could be found everywhere. Even his attap hut was surrounded by trees. One fine day, the old farmer asked his elder son, who had grown up into a strong and healthy man, to clear the land so that it might be farmed once more. His son, being young and active, quickly got hold of an axe and started chopping a huge tree beside the hut. The side of the tree near the hut was chopped and finally the tree gave way, and it fell down on top of the hut killing the old farmer, who was the only one inside at that time. If the son had chopped the tree on the other side of the trunk, then it would not have fallen on the hut.

Thus we see that although the son had the right intention of helping his aged father, yet he did not make the right effort to carry out his will properly. Wrong Effort is usually harmful in its effects. It is only through Right Effort that things can be done as the doer wishes, or as they ought to be done. Right Effort must always be guided by Right Thought.

RIGHT EFFORT

Constant let thine effort be
From delusion's slavery,
By the Truth, thy mind to free,
Wisdom to attain.

Break the bonds of sense-desire
Holding thee in error's mire,
And with all thine heart aspire
Purity to know.

Strive the ego to deny,
Let all selfish cravings die,
To all beings low and high
Love and kindness show.

Never let thine effort cease
Till in ultimate release
And in Buddha's perfect peace
Thou hast reached thy goal.

— A. R. Zorn.

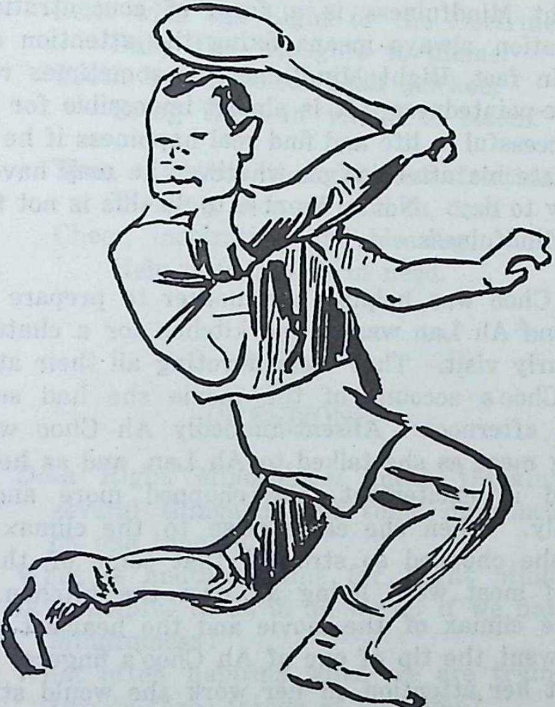
QUESTIONS

1. What meaning does *Right Effort* have for you?
2. How many sub-divisions are there to Right Effort? What are they?
3. What must we use in order that we may put our good ideas and intentions in practice?
4. When is the best time for us to put forth Right Effort? Yesterday or tomorrow or today?
5. What is the main cause of wrong efforts?
6. A motor car cannot run without petrol. We cannot have happy, successful lives if we do not use....
7. If a boy wishes to learn to swim, can he learn by sitting on the beach and looking at the water? What must he do?
8. Is Right Understanding of much value if it is not coupled with Right Effort?
9. What do we call people who do not like to make effort?
10. How far can a bird fly with one wing? How much value do the other seven points of the Noble Path have if Right Effort is missing? Is it like trying to fly with one wing?

RIGHT MINDFULNESS

This point is often called Right Recollectedness or Right Attention. Actually it means keeping one's mind on what one is doing. As an example of how important it is to have this Right Mindfulness, or Right Attention, let us imagine a boy is riding his bicycle down a busy city-street. He is not paying attention to what he is doing and absent-mindedly goes through a stop-light. Another vehicle strikes his bike and the boy gets badly hurt. All this happens as a result of not using this important point seven of the Noble Path.

Right Mindfulness is a very great help to us in every good thing we do. Any job we are doing is a job that is done better if we use Right Mindfulness. If we fail to centre our attention on what we are doing, then it is very likely that the finished job will not be satisfactory.



The most successful students are those who have trained themselves to give complete attention to whatever subject they may be studying. If the subject is mathematics, then it is not a good use of point seven if the student's attention wanders away and he begins to worry over whether or not he will pass his history examination. He would have a far better chance to pass *all* his examinations if he gave his undivided attention to each subject in its turn. Have you ever noticed that when we are trying to do three or four things at the same time, we usually get them only partly finished or, at most, imperfectly done. That is because there is divided attention. Divided attention is never Right Attention.

Right Mindfulness is a form of concentration and concentration always means fixing the attention on one point. In fact, Right Mindfulness is sometimes referred to as one-pointedness. It is almost impossible for anyone to be successful in life and find real happiness if he cannot concentrate his attention on whatever he may have to do from day to day. Not to be able to do this is not to have Right Mindfulness.

Ah Choo was helping her mother to prepare dinner. Her friend Ah Lan was in the kitchen for a chatty little neighbourly visit. They were devoting all their attention to Ah Choo's account of the movie she had seen the previous afternoon. Absent-mindedly Ah Choo went on chopping meat as she talked to Ah Lan, and as her story increased in excitement, she chopped more and more vigorously. When she came close to the climax of the movie, she chopped so strongly that some of the small pieces of meat were flying all over the kitchen. Then came the climax of the movie and the heaviest chop of all; off went the tip of one of Ah Choo's fingers! If she had kept her attention on her work she would still have her finger undamaged.

RIGHT MINDFULNESS

Keep thou thy mind as a garden,
Let not thy diligence cease,
Weeding out evil and error,
Striving the good to increase.

Sow thou by Highest Attention
Thoughts that are holy and pure;
Constant and earnest endeavour
Vigour and growth will assure.

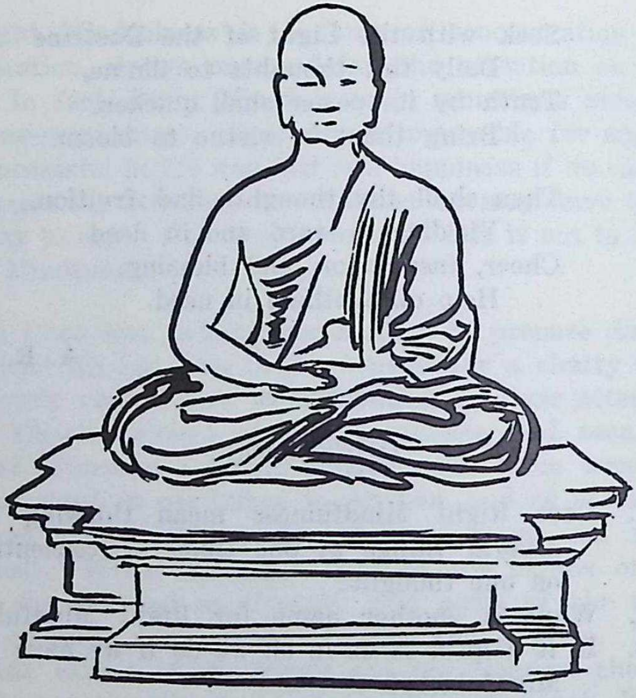
Seek with the Light of the Doctrine
Daily thy thoughts to illume,
Truth by its power shall quicken,
Bring them in virtue to bloom.

Then shall thy thoughts find fruition,
Yielding in word and in deed
Cheer, inspiration and blessing,
Help unto others in need.

A. R. Zorn.

QUESTIONS

1. Does Right Mindfulness mean thinking about several things at one time, or concentrating on one thought?
2. What is another name for Right Mindfulness?
3. Is it helpful to us in all we do if we have Right Mindfulness?
4. What often happens when we are trying to do two or three things at one time?
5. Is "one-pointedness" a good way to describe Right Mindfulness?
6. What caused Ah Choo to cut off her finger tip?
7. If we do not have Right Mindfulness, are we more likely to have happiness or unhappiness?
8. When we grow up and are working, will Right Mindfulness help us to succeed?
9. If we do not use Right Mindfulness in our school work, are we likely to pass the examinations?
10. Try to do some simple addition while you are saying the ABC and see what happens.



RIGHT MEDITATION

Right Meditation is often called *Right Concentration*, because it is shutting out of the mind of all but one thought. Real meditation usually comes about only after long practice. But boys and girls can practise some of the various forms of meditation and really ought to try to meditate at least a little every day.

Many Buddhist families have either morning or evening devotions, or both, and it is a good custom to use the meditation on goodwill as part of the devotions. Here is the formula that is used for the sending forth of thoughts of goodwill to all beings:

"We surround all mankind and all forms of life with infinite love and compassion. Particularly do we send forth loving thoughts to those in suffering and sorrow, to all those in doubt and ignorance, to all who are striving to find Truth, and to those whose feet are standing close beside the gate of death, we send out oceans of compassion, love and goodwill."

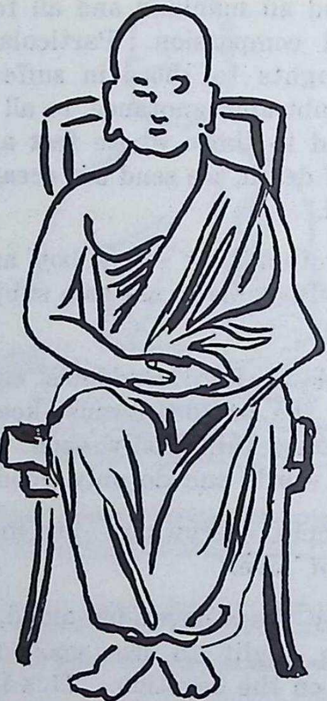
Another devotion that every boy and girl ought to know by heart and be able to use as a subject of meditation every day is this:

"I am a link in Lord Buddha's chain of love that stretches around the world. I must keep my link bright and strong. I must think only good thoughts; I must speak only good words and do only good deeds.

May all people everywhere become links in Lord Buddha's chain of love."

When we say these devotions aloud, or silently think about them, we ought to use good mind-control and concentrate only on the devotion. This is good experience for us and will help us to become good users of the deeper meditation when we are grown-ups.

Every Buddhist boy and girl ought to know at least a little about meditation. There are several ways we can sit when we are meditating, but the best is to use the way that Lord Buddha used. He sat in the double lotus position, or as it is often called, in Sanskrit, the *Padmasana*. If we have used chairs all our lives, and do not attempt to sit in meditation until we are grown-ups, we may find that our muscles and joints have become somewhat stiff, and the *Padmasana* will become uncomfortable for us. But if we start to sit in this position when we are boys and girls and sit that way only ten or



fifteen minutes each day, then the double-lotus posture will be easy for us all through life. Here is how it is done — first remove your shoes or sandals, then, if you are wearing a belt that is a bit tight, loosen it. That goes for neckties too. The next step is to sit on the floor and take the left foot and place it (with the sole of the foot up) on your right thigh. Then take the right foot and place it sole up on the left thigh. Now straighten your back, hold your head erect, partly close your eyes, place your right hand in your left hand, palms up, thumbs lightly touching.

Now that you have your body in the right position, you must get both your body and mind in a calm and peaceful condition and this is done by breath-control. Silently you say to yourself — "one I breathe in" and then you inhale slowly and deeply and hold your breath for a moment or two. The mouth must be kept closed all during these breathing exercises. Next say mentally — "one I breathe out" and then slowly exhale the breath. Do this to the count of ten and keep your attention centred on nothing but your breathing. This is a good way to learn to concentrate.

The next step is to think only of goodwill. Send thoughts of goodwill to yourself for a moment or two. Then silently recite the devotions that are given in this lesson. This will be easier if we know the devotions by heart. Later on, when we are grown-ups, there are other forms of meditation, but the sample given in this lesson is a good one for boys and girls to use as a starter.

SWEET TIME OF MEDITATION

Sweet time of meditation,
The quiet time of peace,
When from life's care and turmoil
I find a blest release.

In silent contemplation,
New faith and hope I win;
More light and deeper knowledge
More strength to conquer sin.

Sweet time of meditation,
When, silent and alone,
The Master's word I ponder,
His truth to make mine own.

With earnest purpose seeking,
I gather more and more
Of Wisdom's holy treasure
From His exhaustless store.

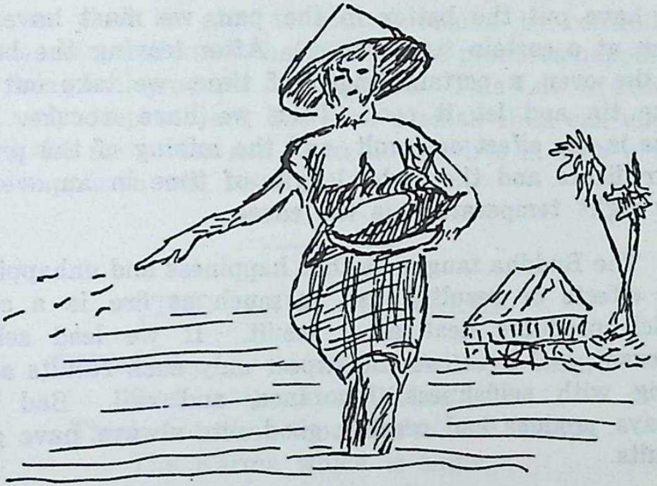
Sweet time of meditation,
When oft there comes to me,
A vision of the Master
Beneath the Bodhi tree.

And with Him in that vigil,
My spirit seems to share
A foretaste of Nirvana,
Of bliss beyond compare.

— A. R. Zorn.

QUESTIONS

1. What is another name for Right Meditation?
2. Is concentration always meditation, or do we mean *religious* concentration?
3. Do we need practice to become an expert in meditation?
4. Can boys and girls start to learn how to meditate?
5. What do we call the position when we sit cross-legged on the floor?
6. What are the rules about the breathing exercises?
7. How do we place our hands?
8. What is a good subject to use for concentration?
9. Do you know some devotions that can be used for "broadcasting"?
10. Is it a good idea to meditate many hours at a time?



THE LAW OF KARMA

Karma is a Sanskrit word meaning *action*. As we Buddhists use the term, the meaning is clearer if we describe it as action and *reaction*, or act and *result*. Another way to describe Karma is *cause and effect*.

When we plant rice, we do not expect a harvest of pepper. We do not make a fire in order to produce coolness. In everything in life we find that if we know all the causes, then we can reliably predict the effects. For example, we know that if we are careless with matches, a fire is likely to result and may even destroy the house. But we also know that we can never burn down the house with ice. It is the nature of fire to burn and destroy. Ice has a different nature and produces entirely different effects. Let us think of producing something else. Let us pretend we want to bake a cake for someone's birthday. We know we must have flour, salt, milk, flavouring, etc., and must mix all these ingredients carefully. Then, when we have put the batter in the pan, we must have the oven at a certain temperature. After leaving the batter in the oven a certain length of time, we take out the cake tin and let it cool. Then we have a cake. The cake is the effect or result, and the mixing of the proper ingredients and the right length of time in an oven at the right temperature is the cause.

The Buddha taught us that happiness and unhappiness are effects or results, just as much as fire is a cause which produces heat as a result. If we lead selfish, ignorant, evil lives, we can expect only such results as go along with selfishness, ignorance, and evil. Bad acts always produce bad results; good acts always have good results.

Probably many of you boys and girls have saving banks at home, and put some coins in the bank each week. Our thoughts and actions are like putting money in the bank of life; bad thoughts and actions are like counterfeit money. Sometimes people are arrested for trying to spend false money, either made of lead or else printed imitations of real money. Misfortune is sure to come to anyone who tries to spend such money. Misfortune is also sure to come to anyone who puts bad thoughts and bad acts into "The Bank of Karma". We can save up real happiness only if we think good thoughts and do good acts. No one can ever rob us of our Karma. Evil results always come from evil causes; good results always come from good causes. If we wish to be happy, then we must store up causes of happiness, just as we plant rice seeds in order to get a harvest of rice.

It is extremely important for all young people to keep in mind the importance of getting a practical understanding of the Law of Karma. If we have this understanding, then we shall be able to control results by controlling causes. We shall know that doing good produces happiness, and doing evil produces unhappiness. This Law of Karma is a very deep subject, but even a small child can understand the main idea and learn how to live in such a way that happiness will result.

THE LAW OF KARMA

What e'er ye sow that shall ye reap,
Such is the Law Divine.
Think not that thou can'st e'er escape
The Karma which is thine.

The present is the true result
Of actions all our own,
The sower always reaps the fruits
Of seeds which he has sown.

The Law is ever just and true
And all must surely bear,
The strict result of every act
For none the Law can spare.

Weep not for what is past and gone,
For it cannot return.
This is the teaching Buddha gave
For all His sons to learn.

Do not despair, the future still
Is thine to mar or make;
Sow then to-day good seeds and pure,
And reap their harvest great.

The goal divine still shines afar
All may this goal attain,
When they have learned good seeds to sow
And things of self have slain.

— D. Hunt.

QUESTIONS

1. What does *Karma* mean?
2. Can fire produce cold, can pepper grow from rice seed?
3. Do good results come from evil acts?
4. Does unhappiness come from leading a good, kind and unselfish life?
5. Can happiness come from evil and selfish living?
6. In what way is Karma like a bank?
7. Is it important for us to understand the Law of Karma?
8. Can boys and girls understand this Law and use it to produce happiness?
9. What is meant by "false money"?
10. We cannot control the past, but can we control the future by making wise use of the present time?

REBIRTH

We cannot understand the teaching concerning rebirth unless we have first understood how the Law of Karma works. Rebirth depends on karma. If we think good thoughts and do only good acts in this life, we not only get good results here and now, but we also get a better rebirth when our life in this world is finished.

A person's karma, good or bad, is actually that person and it is the karma that is reborn in some other life, either in a heaven or a hell, or again in this world. In some cases, a person with extremely bad karma might be reborn as an animal. Let us imagine a man so cruel and bloodthirsty that he is like a tiger in all his thought and action. It is quite possible that such a person might be reborn as a tiger. Or to imagine another case — a person whose habits make him seem very much like a pig. How could we expect such a person to be reborn as a heavenly being, or even as a good, normal, decent human being?

All of us know the ancient saying: "Straws show which way the wind is blowing." It is the same with our own lives. Our habits show what kind of people we really are. Those whose habits in this life show that they are very closely akin to pigs, will probably be reborn in the animal world — as pigs. Everything connected with rebirth depends on karma.

There is more than one kind of rebirth, and one variety is a sort of rebirth here and now in this life. When a bad person changes and becomes good, that is a type of rebirth. The same is true of a good person who changes and becomes evil. But, as a rule, when we speak of rebirth, we are thinking of what happens to us when we die. If we want to know what kind of life we shall have when we die and leave this world, we need only look at our present lives. If we are lazy and do not study the Buddha's teachings, and do not follow the Five Precepts and the Eightfold Noble Path, then we cannot expect a good and happy rebirth into a world better than this one. On the other hand, those who study the Dharma and live the Dharma, who are kind and unselfish, such persons can expect a happy rebirth into a heaven-world or some other good rebirth.

Our lives move very swiftly. Now we are boys and girls, still going to school. But, almost before we know what has happened, we find we are grown-ups and soon we are old. Not many persons live to age one hundred, but, even if we do live to that age, there comes the time when we must leave this life. Therefore, it is very important for each of us to be very careful about all we think and do. Our thoughts and actions are our karma, good or bad, and it is our karma that is reborn.

Any boy or girl who begins to lead a good Buddhist life in childhood and continues to be a good Buddhist all through his or her life, need never worry about rebirth. But the really important thing to do is to make an early start. If we create only good karma in our lives, we do not have to wait until we die to receive benefits. We shall surely obtain happiness in this life as well as in the life to come.

SONG OF THE PILGRIM

No sentient life in all the worlds,
Will ever cease to be;
Unending all as thou and I,
Though forms change constantly.

The life imprisoned in the earth,
May bloom as lovely flower;
So all evolve a fairer birth,
When law brings forth the hour.

On through the endless aeons of time,
Through forms from stone to man,
All beings to perfection climb;
Such is the faultless plan.

Perfected men the Masters are,
And we shall also climb
To starry heights in worlds afar
And know the Truth Sublime.

Remembering always "That thou art,"
The path will lighter grow;
The Buddha seed within our heart
Will guide to those who know.

— A. C. Constable.

HAPPY LITTLE CHILDREN

Happy little children we,
By the Dharma keeping;
We shall all in love and joy
Fit reward be reaping.

Kindness, pity and goodwill,
We'll always be showing;
Malice, hatred, spite and fear,
From our hearts o'erthrowing.

— F. Blanning-Pooley.

QUESTIONS

1. What does rebirth mean to you?

2. What law governs rebirth?

3. What is the meaning in English of *Karma*?

4. Name some ways of being reborn, both good ways and bad ones.

5. If we change our way of living, is that a kind of rebirth?

6. If we follow the Five Precepts and the Eightfold Path, can we make good karma and have a happy rebirth?

7. Will unkindness, selfishness, cruelty and other evil acts cause a person to be reborn in a happy world?

8. What could cause a human being to be reborn as an animal?

9. When is the best time to start making good karma for a good rebirth?

10. If we lead good lives and follow Lord Buddha's teachings, need we worry about rebirth?

गुल्मी, थानपति-२ निवासी वेदराज ज्ञवालीद्वारा
...वाल्मीकि विद्यापीठ पुस्तकालयलाई
उपहार स्वरूप.......प्रदान !
वे.रा.ज्ञवाली
२०३२/११/२४

THE THREE SIGNS

The Lord Buddha taught us that there are three signs or marks that go along with everything in this world. Most grown-ups know them either by their Pali or Sanskrit names. In Sanskrit they are, (1) *Duhkha,* (2) *Anitya,* (3) *Anatman* and these words mean (1) Sorrow, (2) Never-ending change, (3) Lack of an unchanging soul. In Pali the words are similar to the Sanskrit and are: *Dukkha, Anicca* and *Anatta.*

Some people claim that these three ideas are very hard for a child to understand. This cannot be true. Even an infant, barely able to walk, has already learned about pain and disappointment. The baby often wants what it cannot have and sometimes shows strong dislike for what it can have. That is not all there is to the Buddha's teaching about sorrow, but at least this way of putting it gives us a fair idea of the teaching.

The deeper teaching is that Sorrow is universal. That means it touches all living things. No form of life can go all through life and not know sorrow in many forms. This is a law of life. Even when happy children are choosing sides for a game, the shadow of unhappiness is near. One side will win the game and, if there are winners, then there must be losers.

The second sign, or mark, is the law of constant change *(Anitya)*. Everything in our lives and everything in the world is not quite the same for any two moments. As soon as the most beautiful flower blooms, it starts to fade. It may seem a bit strange to say that even little children are rapidly growing old and are constantly changing, just as the freshly bloomed flower is changing and fading, but the statement is true just the same. Nothing can remain the same or escape changing. We are born, we grow up to be big enough to come to Dharma school, suddenly we find we are grown-up. Then we find we are slowing down because we are growing old. Finally we come to end of this life, and every moment of life has been different from every other moment. The Buddha told us that only Truth is everlasting and unchanging.

If we understand the second sign, or mark, then it is easy to understand the third mark of *anatman*, or lack of an unchanging soul. We Buddhists are taught by our Lord that the mind and all our thoughts — our characters and all that we commonly call "I" or "Me", change just as much as our bodies or anything else. There is nothing about a person that is permanent.

Those who like to criticise Buddhism often say that we Buddhists deny we have souls. That statement is true or untrue, depending on what is meant when we use the word "soul". Our teaching is that *character* is a more accurate term to use in this case than soul. Character is the sum or total of a person's thoughts and acts. It is his karma and is his true personality. We deny that anyone has a "soul" that is an unchanging something, a something different from the total of his character.

THE THREE SIGNS

Dukkha, Anicca, Anatta,
The leaves are falling fast,
The reign of the rose is ended,
The sky is overcast.
The whole world is filled with sadness,
From city and jungle rise
The cry of life's suffering children —
The daylight slowly dies.

Our Lord looked with love and pity
Upon every living thing,
From the lowliest child of nature
To the mightiest crowned king.
For hatred, delusion, passion
Still claim and enslave us all,
And each alike on the wheel of change
Must suffer, and rise, and fall.

Dukkha, Anicca, Anatta,
Tho' every life knows pain
He who faithfully walks the Path
Will not look for help in vain.
The Law of the Tathagatha
Forever will light the way;
It is our moon to shine by night,
Our sun to illume the day.

In Lord Buddha we take our Refuge,
His Law of Good our guide,
To pilot us as we toss and drift
On being's remorseless tide.
With the Dharma's light to steer by
Some day we'll fear rocks no more,
But, merit won, each will moor his barque
On Nirvana's changeless shore.

— Geraldine E. Lyster.

THE ETERNAL REFUGE

We thirst for something lasting, something real
In this our world of constant change and strife;
A spot wherein our spirits may find rest,
Amid the storms and agony of life.

But while we seek confused by things of sense,
Bewildered by the calls of self and sin,
We oft forget the words Lord Buddha spoke:
The gateway of the Kingdom lies within.

Great tempests rage o'er oceans mighty face,
While angry billows sweep and surge around,
But in the depths far hidden out of sight,
Eternal Peace and Perfect Calm are found.

So are there depths within the spirit hid,
Where storms and winds of passion never blow;
And all who rest within this hallowed spot,
The hidden joys of Truth shall surely know.

— **D. Hunt.**

QUESTIONS

1. What do we call the three marks that go along with everything?
2. Name these three signs.
3. What are they called in Sanskrit or Pali?
4. Can even a small child understand these signs?
5. Does sorrow touch only a few people, or does it comes to us all?
6. Is there anything in the world that is always the same?
7. We know our bodies are constantly changing. Do our characters also change constantly?
8. What really makes our character?
9. Can we change character?
10. Does the Truth taught us by Lord Buddha change, or is it the one thing that is always unchangingly true?

GOLDEN CHAIN OF LOVE

THE SEVEN JEWELS

1. Blessed are they that reject evil; for they shall attain purity.
2. Blessed are they that seek holiness; for they shall attain serenity.
3. Blessed are they that seek knowledge; for they shall attain understanding.
4. Blessed are they that promote peace; for they shall attain happiness.
5. Blessed are they that seek Truth; for they shall attain Wisdom.

6. Blessed are they that practise Virtue; for they shall attain Perfection.
7. Blessed are they that follow the Path; for they shall attain Enlightenment.

These beautiful lines, which are known as "The Seven Jewels of the Dharma", cause us to have feelings of peace and comfort in our hearts when we recite them. Let us take each of these Seven Jewels, one at a time, and try to see how much meaning we can get out of each one.

(1) Those who cast evil out of their hearts and minds, find purity, just as a white cloth covered with mud becomes white again when the mud is washed away. The cloth was originally white and only the mud covered the whiteness. Evil does the same thing to our hearts and minds. When we throw away evil, purity remains.

(2) If we really seek to follow the Buddha's Holy Law, we shall find serenity. Serenity means peace and calm, freedom from worries and fears.

(3) Those who try to gain good knowledge of the Dharma will find good understanding. That is very necessary if we are really trying to walk on the Noble Eightfold Path.

(4) It is so easy to start quarrels and cause trouble. It is not always easy to stop anger and fighting once they get started. Those who live peaceful, friendly lives and create no ill-will are happy. When such persons make peace between those who quarrel and fight, they have even more happiness because there is more peace in the world.

(5) So many seek excitement and constant amusement that they often forget to seek what is best of all — The Truth. If we study the Dharma we shall learn much truth and shall become wise.

(6) Merely to think about Virtue is not enough. This sixth jewel says we must *practice* Virtue. If we keep on being virtuous, finally we shall come to perfection. "Practice makes Perfect."

(7) Blessed are they that follow the Path, for they shall attain Enlightenment. The best of all paths is the Buddha's Path of Eight Points. All who practise these eight points faithfully, will finally reach Enlightenment and be completely free from ignorance.

SONG OF THE GOLDEN RULE

Do unto others as you wish
That they should do to you.
Then would this earth a heaven be
So beautiful and true.

Be kind to those who are unkind
Give love to those who hate;
Thus will your merit be untold,
Your blessings very great.

Give unto all the best you have
To all a favour do,
And all those blessings in their time
Will then come back to you.

— C. Albers.

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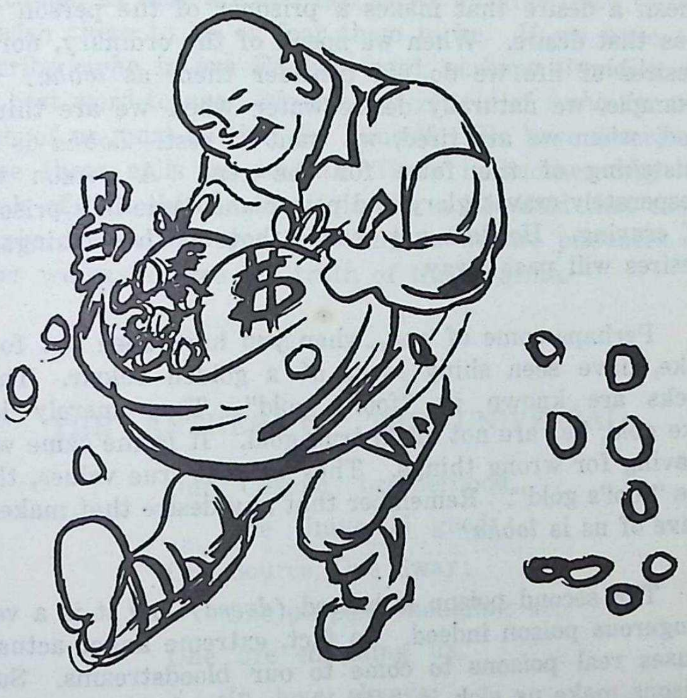
QUESTIONS

1. How many Jewels of the Dharma are there?
2. Can you recite them in proper order?
3. What similarity is there between removing mud from cloth and getting evil out of heart and mind?
4. Can we really follow the Dharma well if we are lacking in understanding?
5. Which is easier: to start trouble or to make peace?
6. If we bring peace and happiness to others, do we get peace and happiness ourselves?
7. If we only think about virtue, is that enough?
8. What is an old saying about the value of practice?
9. When we have overcome ignorance we have.....
10. What is the lesson the poem teaches us?



THE THREE EVILS

Sometimes these three evils are known as "the Three Poisons" and that is quite a good name for them. The three are — craving, hatred and delusion. In very many books these three poisons are called by either their Sanskrit or Pali names. In Sanskrit they are *lobha, dvesa* and *moha*. The only difference when they are given in Pali is that *dvesa* becomes *dosa*. But, no matter how we may call these three evils, they are sources of sorrow to all who allow such poisons to come into their minds.

Craving is a form of slavery, it is like being a chained prisoner. When Buddhists speak of this evil they always mean a desire that makes a prisoner of the person who has that desire. When we speak of the ordinary, normal desires of life we do not consider them as *lobha*. For example, we naturally desire water when we are thirsty and, when we are tired, we want to rest. *Lobha* is the mistaking of the false for the real. A person who desperately craves glory and power and fame is a prisoner of craving. He does not realise that all these things he desires will pass away.

Perhaps some of you, when you have been out for a hike, have seen shiny rocks of a golden colour. These rocks are known as "fool's gold". They merely look like gold, but are not at all true gold. It is the same with craving for wrong things. They are not true values, they are "fool's gold". Remember that any desire that makes a slave of us is *lobha*.

The second poison is hatred *(dvesa)* and it is a very dangerous poison indeed. In fact, extreme anger actually causes real poisons to come to our bloodstreams. Such poisons make us sick in both body and mind. Anger and hatred are closely akin and frequently are found together. No one can truthfully say that he is a real follower of Lord Buddha's Dharma, if his heart and mind are filled with hatred and anger. Not only must we get rid of *dvesa,* we must also fill our hearts with kindliness and goodwill towards all.

The third poison is delusion. There are very many ways to describe delusion. *Wrong ideas* is one way. All these three poisons come from wrong thinking. *Moha* is always the mistaking of the false for the real. It is mistaking "fool's gold" for real gold. The Buddha told us that we must see clearly and think clearly. We must see things as they are and not as we imagine them to be, or wish them to be or fear them to be. If we have to describe *moha* in one English word, perhaps *stupidity* is the best word to use. No one can get rid of *moha* for us. Each of us must do that for himself. We have described these three evils as *poisons*. There is another way to speak of this third evil. It is like a blindfold that completely covers the eyes. As long as we are prisoners of *moha* we cannot see the truth of the Dharma.

THE ANTHEM OF THE UNIVERSAL

One Cosmic brotherhood,
One Universal good,
One Source, One Sway;
One purpose moulding us,
One life enfolding us,
In love always.
Anger, resentment, hate,
Long made us desolate;
Their reign is done.
Race, colour, creed and caste
Fade in the dreamy past
Man wakes to learn at last:
All life is one!

— Sir Francis Younghusband.

THE BUDDHIST'S FATE

Happy is the Buddhist's fate,
For his heart knows not of hate;
Haters may be all around,
Yet in him no hate is found.

Happy is the Buddhist's fate,
He all pining makes abate;
Pining may be all around,
Yet in him no pining's found.

Happy is the Buddhist's fate,
Him no greed will agitate;
In the world may greed abound,
Yet in him no greed is found.

Happily then let us live,
Joyously our service give;
Quench all pining, hate and greed
Happy is the life we lead.

— Paul Carus.

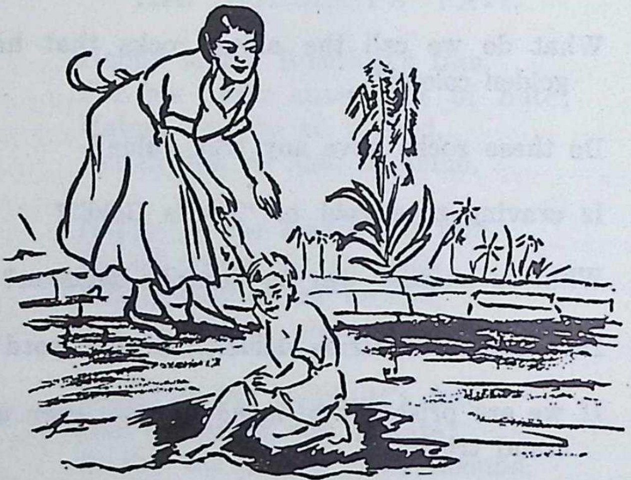
QUESTIONS

1. What is another name for The Three Evils?

2. If we have these poisons in our hearts and minds, do they bring us happiness?

3. If we have craving, what are we like? Are we free?

4. What do we call the shiny rocks that have a golden colour?
5. Do these rocks have any true value?
6. Is craving true gold or "Fool's Gold"?
7. What is another way to describe delusion?
8. How can we describe delusion in one word?
9. If we are prisoners of *moha* can we ever understand truth?
10. Does Lord Buddha's teaching make any difference between races and castes?



OUR DUTIES TOWARDS OTHERS

It is so easy for us to think of our duties to ourselves and also of our rights. It is quite true that we have duties to ourselves and we also have rights. But if we allow ourselves to centre our thoughts on self, then we have overlooked something that is very important in the Buddhist way of life, and that is our duty to others.

No one can ever be truly happy who thinks only of himself, of his own needs and wants, his own likes and dislikes and his own pleasures. Each of us has duties towards our friends, associates, and to all living beings everywhere.

In modern times we hear a great deal about co-operation. The Chinese have a very expressive way of stating the idea of co-operation. It is "pulling together". To be self-centred is to pull away from others. Most of the good things in life can be had more easily by all of us if there is more and more pulling together.

Our Buddhist religion teaches us that selfishness is a poison. If we seek only our own personal happiness, then we are pulling against ourselves. A man may gain riches, power and fame, but they are not sure guarantees of happiness. There is a very beautiful word which is the same in both Sanskrit and Pali, *Mudita*, meaning the joy we find in the joy of others. A person who is glad that others are happy has an unselfish heart and such a person, whether child or grown-up is good at "pulling together". Envy at the sight of others' happiness is a sure sign of selfishness.

While we are still young, we ought to start learning the importance of group-effort, of "pulling together", in order to bring about the well-being and happiness of all. Being a member of a Buddhist Dharma school is a good way to learn how to get along well with others and to "pull together." When we are older we ought to join a Buddhist Association and take part in as many of its activities as possible. We must never make the mistake of believing that anyone who thinks only of himself and keeps to himself, can find real happiness.

THE ONENESS OF LIFE

O Heart of all the world
You beat as one,
All suffer pain and loss
When evil's done.

Think not, oh, lordly man
To stand alone,
Harm but the weakest life
And all atone.

Creatures that walk or run,
Fly, swim or crawl,
Hurt to the least of them
Is hurt to all.

By his deeds, good or ill,
Each seals his fate,
Strive to help, heal and bless
Early and late.

Oh, wondrous Soul of Things
You too, are One
All will be merged in Thee
When peace is won.

Life's troublous ocean crossed,
Enfranchised free,
Those who have reached Life's goal
Are One with Thee

— Geraldine E. Lyster.

QUESTIONS

1. Is it easier to think of ourselves or of others?
2. Do we have duties to ourselves and also to others?
3. What are some duties we have to ourselves?
4. What are some duties we have to others?
5. Can a selfish person be really happy?

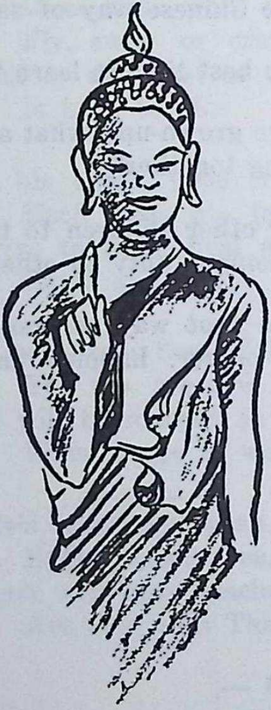
6. What is the Chinese way of saying *Co-operation?*

7. When is the best time to learn to "pull together"?

8. When we are grown-ups, what are some good ways of "pulling together"?

9. If we bring other children to the Dharma school, is that doing a duty to others?

10. What is the best way we can work together to make a bigger, happier and better Dharma school?



THE MEANING OF WESAK

The word *Wesak* is the shortened form of the name of a month, *Vaisakha,* in the ancient Indian calendar. However, when we Buddhists speak of Wesak we do not mean a month, but a day, and this day is the holiest of all holy days to us.

Most holidays and holy days are in honour of some one thing only, in each case. Sometimes it is someone's birthday, or it may be in honour of a country's independence, or perhaps it is the anniversary of a great military victory. But Wesak commemorates not just one event, but three. It is the triple anniversary of the greatest events in the life of our Lord Buddha.

This holy day is the Buddha's birthday, the day on which He gained enlightenment, and is also the anniversary of His final passing away. Thus it is easy to see why it is that we Buddhists consider Wesak as being the very holiest of all holy days and why we have bigger celebrations on this day than on any other day.

Sometimes Wesak is called "the Flower Festival", because Lord Buddha was born in a garden of flowers at Lumbini. Also there is a story that flowers fell out of heaven when He became enlightened under the Bodhi tree at Buddha Gaya, and again when He finally passed away at Kusinara. There are always offerings of flowers before the images of the Buddha on this day. Also it is very proper to offer fruits, joss sticks, water, rice, and any gift that will show love and respect for the Blessed One on His triple anniversary day.

Every Buddhist community ought to have special celebrations on this day, including public processions, illuminations of temples and shrines, displays of Buddhist flags, and all that will call public attention to the day and its meaning. If the Dharma school children take part in the procession that is a very good and pious act. It is not at all a good idea to wait until we are grown-ups to begin to do pious acts. The earlier in life we start, the better.

(Read the "Life Story of the Buddha" with this lesson)

HOLY DAY OF WESAK

Buddha, Lord we offer,
Oh Thy birthday fair,
Garlands of the brightest
Blossoms choice and rare.

Holy Day of Wesak,
    Day of Buddha's birth,
When the sun of wisdom
    Shone upon the earth.

Incense too we offer
    On this Festal Day,
For the things we cherish
    All must pass away.

Through this holy symbol
    We shall learn to see,
Things of priceless value
    Hid in transiency.

And the deep gong sounding
    Bids us leave the self,
And in Buddha's teaching
    Find the truest wealth.

Lights upon the altar
    Show to us the way,
From the realms of darkness
    To Nirvana's day.

— D. Hunt.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is Wesak the holiest of all holy days to Buddhists?
2. Where was Lord Buddha born?
3. About how long ago was he born?

4. Where did the Buddha gain enlightenment?

5. What stories are there about flowers on the three most important occasions in the Buddha's life?

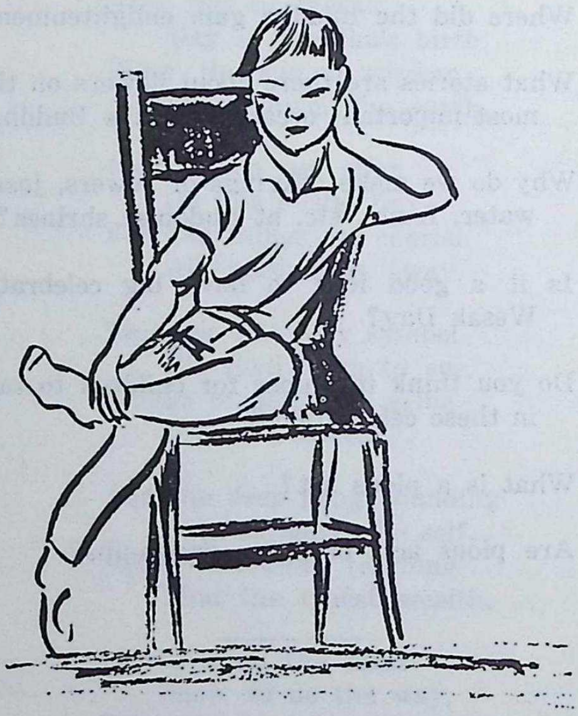
6. Why do we make offerings of flowers, joss sticks, water, fruits, etc. at Buddhist shrines?

7. Is it a good idea to have big celebrations on Wesak Day?

8. Do you think it proper for children to take part in these celebrations?

9. What is a pious act?

10. Are pious acts only for grown-ups?



TRUSTING TO LUCK

It is a very wrong idea to believe in good or bad "luck." If we have such ideas in our minds, we should get rid of them while we are still children, and never again allow such wrong thinking to influence us. If we believe in "luck", then we cannot believe in the Dharma.

Lord Buddha taught us that good effects, that is to say, good results, come from good causes, and that only bad results can come from bad causes. A person who does not do clear thinking and whose actions are not good, cannot reasonably say that the bad effects that come into his life are just "bad luck." Bad thinking and bad living produce bad conditions of life, just as surely as two plus two add up to four. On the other hand, good thinking and good acting produce good conditions of life, just as surely as two plus two add up to four. It is superstitious to believe in "luck", and anyone who has such a belief shows thereby that he does not have any deep understanding of the Buddha's teaching.

Our lives are happy and peaceful or else unhappy and unpeaceful, depending on our own individual way of living. We make our own happiness or unhappiness and there is no such thing as luck. When a person says he has "bad luck", he really means he has *bad karma.* Anyone who understands the teaching about karma, will not make the mistake of believing in luck, because he will know that everything that happens in our lives happens as a result of a cause we ourselves have created.

We all know that if we plant roses we shall soon have a beautiful bush of roses. The rose bush will never blossom with Angsana flowers. That would be against nature's laws. Likewise, if we plant an Angsana tree, we can be certain it will bear Angsana blossoms and never roses. This same law governs our own lives. We get out of life what we put into life. We harvest what we have planted. Every Buddhist child must learn as early as possible in life that whatever happens to us is the result of our own personal karma and that believing in luck shows only ignorance and superstition.

SENTENCES FROM *THE DHARMAPADA*

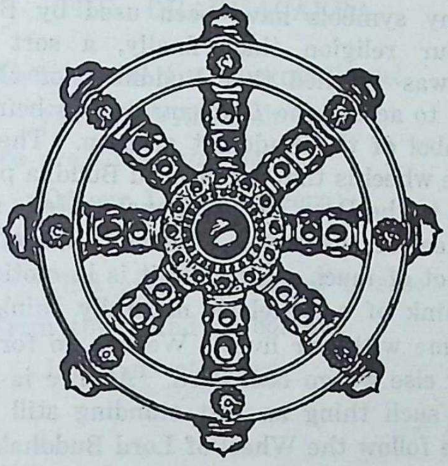
"All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts."

"If a man speaks and acts with pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him."

"Fools of little understanding have themselves for their greatest enemies, for they do evil deeds which must bear bitter fruit."

QUESTIONS

1. Can we believe in "luck" and also believe the Dharma?
2. What does the word "superstition" mean?
3. What do we mean by "laws of nature"?
4. What do good thoughts and good actions produce?
5. What do bad thoughts and bad actions produce?
6. Does some god control our thoughts and acts, or do we control them ourselves?
7. What do we mean by sowing and reaping, planting and harvesting?
8. Does anything "just happen" or is there a cause for everything?
9. Would it be natural for roses to bloom on an Angsana tree?
10. What do we mean by "personal karma"?



THE WHEEL OF THE LAW

Usually, we call *The Wheel Of The Law* by its Sanskrit name of *Dharmacakra* (pronounced *Dharmachakra*). This is only one of the many signs or symbols which are holy to Buddhists, because they stand for our religion and make us think of its teachings when we see any of these symbols. The lotus is the flower of Buddhism and the tree is the Bo or Bodhi tree. In Burma and northern Siam, the tail of the peacock is often used to represent the glory and beauty of the Dharma. The swastika is another sign much used by Buddhists. Sometimes we see three baskets used to represent the Buddhist teaching. Each of the three baskets stands for one of the three main divisions of the Buddhist holy scriptures. At other times we see a shining jewel used to represent our religion and, frequently, three jewels are used. The one jewel means Truth is like a beautiful gem. The Three Jewels stand for the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

So many symbols have been used by Buddhists to represent our religion that, finally, a sort of general agreement was reached that Buddhists of all the world would unite to accept the *Dharmacakra* as being the main sign or symbol of the Buddhist religion. The reason for choosing the wheel is that when Lord Buddha preached His first sermon in the Deer Park at Benares He is said to have "set the wheel of the law in motion." We all know that a wheel is not of much use unless it is in motion. In fact when we think of a wheel we naturally think of motion. It is the same with our lives. We can go forward, make progress, or else we go backward. All life is motion, and there is no such thing as just standing still or marking time. If we follow the Wheel of Lord Buddha's Law, then we are in motion towards happiness. The wheel is usually shown with eight spokes.

The Buddha described the wheel in this way: "The spokes of the wheel are the rules of pure conduct (the Eightfold Path), the equal length of all the spokes represent justice; wisdom is the tyre, the hub is thoughtfulness and the axle is the immovable truth." Just as the cross is the generally accepted sign of Christians, the crescent of Muslims and the Star of David of the Jewish religion, even so, the Wheel of The Law is the one sign of our religion that is recognized all over the world, and we ought to use it more and more, until everyone knows the meaning of this holy symbol. If anyone wishes to wear a badge of the Buddhist religion in the form of a ring or pin or necklace, then the proper symbol to use is the Wheel of The Law. Anyone who wears such a symbol will be constantly reminded that the only true happiness comes from following the Law taught us by Lord Buddha.

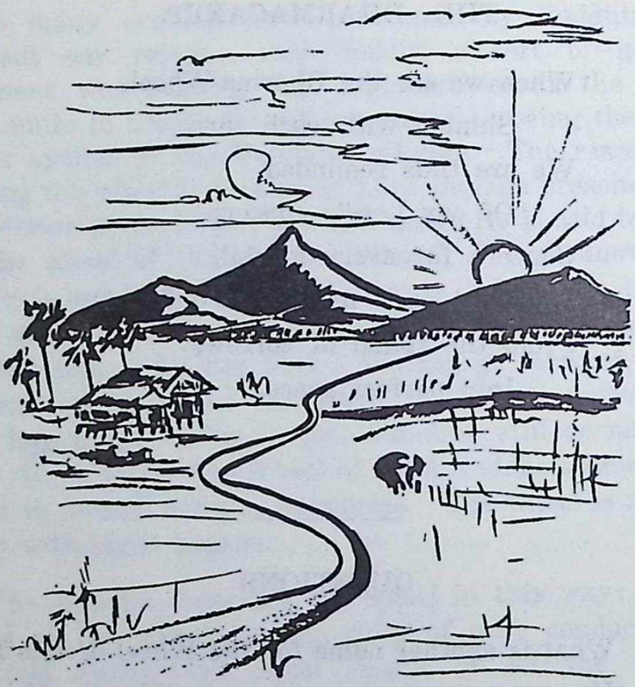
THE DHARMACAKRA

When we see the Dharma-Wheel,
    Shining with each turn,
We are thus reminded
    Of our Lord's concern;
Concern for every mortal,
    That each might find release
From the round of sorrow,
    Into perfect peace.

— S. R.

QUESTIONS

1. What is another name for the Wheel of The Law?
2. How many spokes are there in this wheel?
3. What do these spokes mean?
4. What is meant by the equal length of all the spokes?
5. What does the tyre mean?
6. What does the hub mean?
7. What flower is a symbol of Buddhism?
8. What is the name of the tree of Buddhism?
9. Can you name some symbols used by other religions?
10. Can we really stand still in life, or must we either go forward or backward?



THE TEACHING OF ALL BUDDHAS

"Cease to do evil, do good; purify the heart and mind; this is the teaching of all the Buddhas".

(1) "Cease to do evil".

All of us know the difference between right and wrong. We must not do anything we know will be hurtful to anyone, including ourselves. Birds and animals, too, must not be harmed.

When we speak of *not hurting* anyone or anything, we mean far more than just not causing physical pain.

We must not speak unkind words or invent untrue stories about anyone. We must not do anything wrong even by neglect or carelessness. For example, we forget to fill the dog's water-bowl and the poor dog suffers from thirst. There are many ways to cause suffering simply by carelessness. When we have caused unhappiness to others by any act or word of ours, or by failing to do what we know is right, then we are guilty of doing evil. It is not a good excuse that something wrong we have done is only a "small evil". When Lord Buddha advised us "Cease to do evil", He did not mean only *big* mis-deeds, but also *all* evil.

Ceasing to do all that we know to be wrong is like cleaning a house. Just as we throw away old, broken furniture, we must also clear away wrong thinking and wrong acting. But, if we merely cease to do evil, then we are like a person who has only an empty room in which to live. When we throw away broken furniture, we get new furniture. When we throw away wrong thinking and wrong acting, we must then use right thinking and right acting and this is what is meant by:

(2) "Do good".

Point one is negative, it is "do not". Point two is positive and "do". There is an old Indian story about a man who was always very unhappy. Many people could not understand why he was not happy. Everyone said he was "a very good man". But that was not at all true. He was merely *not a bad man*. He did nothing evil, but also he did nothing good. His life was a negative "do not" life. Happiness comes from a life of right balance between negative and positive. If we have only the "do not" part of right living, then we have the minus sign (—) we use in arithmetic. When we add the "do" part of right living then we have the plus sign (+) in our lives.

When we do good we bring happiness to ourselves and others. Doing wrong often brings excitement or some degree of false joy, but true happiness never comes from doing wrong. Therefore, at the very beginning of the time when we start to think for ourselves, we must try to get correct balance in our lives by clearing away all wrong thinking, wrong talking and wrong actions and replacing them with good thoughts, good speech and good actions.

Everyone wants to be happy, but no one can succeed in being really and truly happy until, first of all, he ceases to do evil and tries hard to do actual good.

(3) "Purify heart and mind".

This point three is very important. When the heart is pure then there is no desire to do evil. When the mind is pure we do not even think of evil, and doing good becomes easier because we actually wish to do good.

Once, a long time ago in China, there was a very famous monk who was known all over the country for his goodness and wisdom. In fact this monk was so well known that even the Emperor wanted a chance to talk with him. A messenger was sent from the imperial palace to the monastery on a distant mountain top where the famous monk lived, asking him to come to the capital and give a lecture to the Emperor on Buddhism.

A month or so later the monk arrived at the Emperor's palace and was received with great honour. That same day the Emperor was celebrating his sixty-fifth birthday and he wanted to do something holy in honour of the occasion. So he decided to visit the famous monk and listen to a sermon. The Emperor and Empress and all the members of the imperial household went into a large hall of the palace and invited the monk to speak to them. The monk asked them the subject on which they would like him to speak. The Emperor replied, "Please tell us what is the deepest teaching of Buddhism". The old monk bowed to the Emperor and answered, "Cease to do evil, do good, purify heart and mind; this is the teaching of all the Buddhas". The Emperor was not pleased with this answer and said, "This is not a deep teaching — even a child of five years can understand it". "Ah, yes", replied the monk — "a child of five years can certainly understand this teaching, but even an old man of sixty-five years may find it hard to put into practice".

THE AGELESS TRUTH

Commit no wrong, but good deeds do
And let your heart be pure;
All Buddhas teach this doctrine true
That will fore'er endure.

Hate is not overcome by hate
By love alone 'tis quelled;
This is a truth of ancient date,
Today still unexcelled.

— Paul Carus.

QUESTIONS

1. Can you recite the little verse that gives the teaching of all the Buddhas?

2. Getting rid of bad thought and bad action (evil) is like cleaning a....... It is like throwing away broken....... .

3. Getting good thoughts and good actions in our lives is like bringing new....... into a house that has been cleaned.

4. Must we be kind to people only? What about pets and all animals and birds?

5. Is evil plus (+) or minus (—)?

6. Evil is minus (—) because
    (a) It takes away happiness.
    (b) It adds happiness.
    Which of these two statements is true?

7. What do we mean by "purify heart and mind"?

8. Can a child understand our Buddhist religion?

9. What did the old monk say to the Emperor about a child of five years and a man of sixty-five years?

10. Try to memorize this famous verse about the teaching of all the Buddhas.

THE GREATEST SECRET IN THE WORLD

If everyone had to pay a large amount of money to learn Lord Buddha's Pathway to happiness, it is very likely that very many persons would pay ever so gladly, in order to learn how to overcome ignorance and sorrow, and find the right road to Wisdom, Peace and Happiness. But there is no charge at all for teaching this plan for thoughtful living and, as a result, many foolish individuals think it of little value just because it is free. Thus it is that the Lord Buddha's Dharma remains a "secret" insofar as most people are concerned. Such individuals are their own enemies, because they are "trusting to luck" for happiness and peace of mind and heart.

Quite often we see booklets on Buddhism printed for free distribution. Very many of these booklets are never read, just because they are free. Yet these little pamphlets and booklets contain the Master Plan of Life and if the teachings outlined in them were carefully studied and followed, the readers would reap enormous benefits. In this age in which we live we so often hear people say, "What am I going to get out of this?" Usually they refer to material benefits, such as money, position, health and so on. The answer to give to a person who wants to know what he can get from following Lord Buddha's teachings is, "You will have better health in both your mind and body, as a result of sensible living. You will even be more successful in business because of better thinking. You will gain peace of mind and calmness of heart—what more could any sane person wish?"

Remember that this "greatest secret in the world" remains a 'secret' only because so many people are too thoughtless to gain for themselves "the treasure that is greater than all other treasures". They rob themselves. Our children who come to Dharma School are making the greatest of all studies: How to live well and happily.

LORD BUDDHA FOUND THE TRUTH

Lord Buddha found the Truth,
That breaks the captive's chains,
The Truth that gladdens hearts forlorn,
And heals the sufferer's pain.

Lord Buddha found the Light
That scatters all our fear,
And on the weary paths of night
It sheds a gladdening cheer.

Lord Buddha found the Way,
The Holy Way of Peace,
For all who tread the Eight Fold Path
Shall find earth's sorrows cease.

Lord Buddha found true Life,
Immortal and sublime,
And those who win the fight with self
Shall find the Life Divine.

Lord Buddha found the Goal,
Nirvana's state most blest,
And those who trust him as their guide,
Will find eternal rest.

– D. Hunt.

QUESTIONS

1. Did Lord Buddha intend his teachings to be kept secret?

2. Are the Buddhist teachings meant to be sold?

3. Where does Lord Buddha's Pathway lead us to?

4. Why are some Buddhist pamphlets seldom read?

5. What do we mean by "material benefits"?

6. If we faithfully follow the Dharma, will our school work be better?

7. How many kinds of treasures are there?

8. Why are the Buddhist teachings "secret" to so many people?

9. What study is the greatest of all?

10. What gift is the greatest of all gifts?

HELPING MOTHER

FILIAL PIETY

The two words, filial piety, are important to all civilized peoples, but they are doubly important to Buddhists. The actual words mean *duties of children to parents,* but there is a much deeper meaning in these words if we are faithful followers of Lord Buddha. The young are not only under a holy obligation to show respect and affection for their parents, but also to be considerate of all elderly persons and to be helpful towards them in such ways as to bring happiness into their lives. In some countries of the world the ideal of filial piety has been almost forgotten. We can see quite clearly that those countries are slipping backwards towards unhappiness.

We Buddhists consider the family as being the most important of all groups. Of course, we think that Buddhist associations, Dharma schools, youth groups and many other clubs, societies and groups are all very important and worthwhile, but the family is most important of all. It is in the family that we first learn the meaning of affection and also get our first knowledge of the difference between right and wrong. Moreover, it is in the family that we learn the ever so necessary art of living in harmony with others. There we learn the lesson that unselfishness and consideration for others make life easier for all of us.

There are two sides to filial piety, just as there are two sides to a coin. One side is the duty of the young to their elders and the other is the duty of the elders to the young. Parents and elders are under an obligation to set good examples to children and to be unfailingly kind and helpful in every good way. If this good example is set, then it is easy and natural for the young to have respect and affection for their parents and elders. We must never make the mistake of thinking of filial piety as being a one-sided thing. Such a condition could be as strange as a coin with but one side. Parental piety must always go along with filial piety.

In the daily newspapers we read much about "delinquent children", but when we talk to most of these boys and girls who have been sent to special schools for "naughty children", we usually find they are just normal, average boys and girls and the real reason why they became "delinquent" was because they were neglected by their elders and never taught the difference between right and wrong. Surely such parents are not Buddhists. It is rather unreasonable to expect filial piety and good conduct from the very young, if their elders fail to set the proper example and to give the affectionate guidance every child needs as preparation for a good, wholesome, happy life. Many judges say that there are far more delinquent parents than children who are really naughty. A Dharma school is a wonderful idea, but the real instruction in right living must begin in the home. The lessons in this book are designed for children, but this one subject is suitable for parents, too. In fact, it ought to be very carefully read and thought about by every Buddhist parent.

THE TWIG AND THE TREE

Gently teach the little children
How to walk the Buddha-way;
Show with kindness and affection,
What to do and what to say.

Even as a tiny twig, if twisted,
Grows into a twisted tree,
So do men and women follow
Patterns learned from infancy.

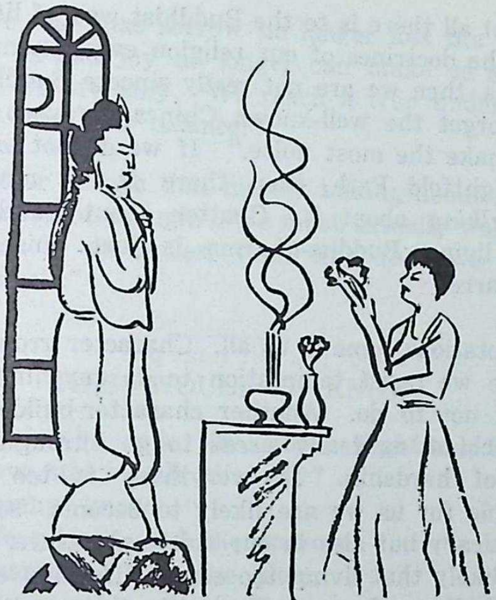
Let us then make sure that always
Example right we clearly show,
So that our youth in life may never
Down the path of evil go.

Teach the young the path to follow;
Show them in their days of youth,
And when old they'll never waver
From Lord Buddha's Path of Truth.

— Sumangalo.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by *filial piety?*
2. What are the two sides to filial piety?
3. Must young people show respect and kindness only to the old in their own families?
4. If boys and girls are not taught right thought and right action, are they likely to grow up with good ideas of filial piety?
5. Is it easy to respect a person who sets a bad example?
6. Where is the proper place to begin the moral instruction of children?
7. Name some ways we can show respect for our elders.
8. Do you think it would be a good idea for the Dharma school to give an entertainment once or twice a year and invite the parents and elders?
9. What do we mean when we say "a twisted twig grows into a twisted tree"?
10. Do you think it would be a good idea for all parents to read and understand this lesson?



SINCERITY

It is so easy to call oneself a Buddhist and to *talk* about religion. Many individuals like to talk about Buddhist doctrines, to recite devotions and to be a Buddhist "on the outside." Our Lord's Dharma is for "the inside" of a person as well as for outside and is far more than just something to argue about or words to recite. If we really have respect for Lord Buddha's Dharma in our hearts, then our "outside" lives will be right and will set bright examples to others.

It is sad that a few of us seem to think that regular recitation of certain favourite devotions is all that is necessary in order to be a first-class Buddhist. Of course, recitations of holy texts are very good indeed, but this is not all there is to the Buddhist way of life. Unless we *live* the doctrines of our religion every moment of our daily lives, then we are not really sincere Buddhists. Let us not forget the well-known Chinese proverb: "Empty barrels make the most noise." If we do not *walk* on the Noble Eightfold Path, then there is not much use in merely *talking* about it. Chatter about Buddha-dharma without living Buddha-dharma is just noise from an empty barrel.

Temptations come to us all. Character grows stronger each time we resist temptation to do anything we know we ought not to do. Another character-builder is hardship. Each of us really *needs* to go through a certain amount of hardship. If everything is too easy and comfortable for us we are likely to become "softies", not only physically but also in our spiritual nature. It is also only too likely that living too easy a life may cause us to lose all feeling of sympathy with those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

The more we learn to resist evil temptations and the more we can endure a certain amount of hardship, whether it be poverty, sickness, disappointment, grief or any other sorrow, the stronger we grow in our moral nature and more and more we have sympathetic understanding of the problems of others.

Sooner or later there comes a time when we realize that the things we used to think were so very important are not so important after all. It is an old and true saying that "the best things in life are free." Certainly this is true of the Buddha-dharma. It is free to all, rich and poor, sick and well, high and low, male and female, and to all races and nationalities. When we master this perfect teaching we find that sorrow no longer has the power to overwhelm us and joy no longer can make us so falsely happy that we are silly. We reach a true understanding of life and "find our balance."

Remember always that merely talking about following the Dharma is not enough. We must actually walk on the Noble Path. If we do less than this, then we are only "empty barrels."

THIS WOULD I KNOW

Of those who talk the Noble Eightfold Way,
How many walk the way?
How many know
The pitfalls and the snares;
The swampland and the plain,
The scorching heat, the snows,
The drenching rain?
The loneliness and heartache
That dismay
The pilgrim as he journeys
Night and day?
How many walk the way?

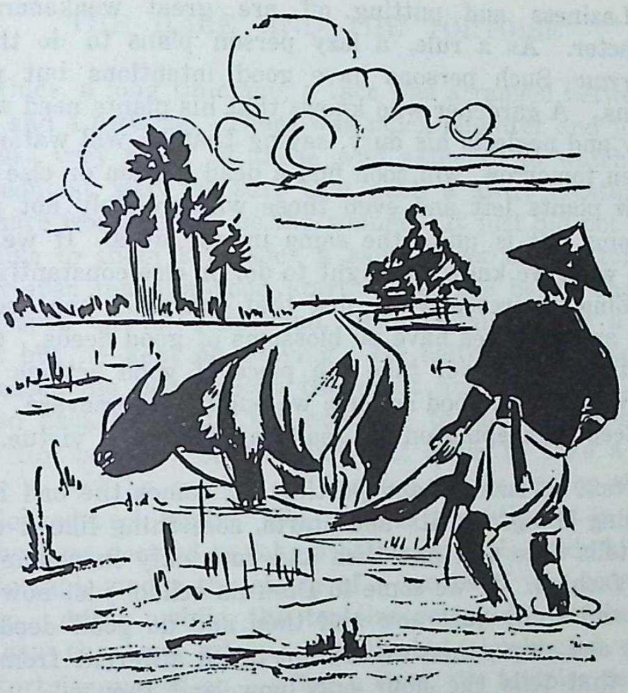
This would I know:
Of those who prate the Fourfold Noble Truths,
How many speak the truth?
How many know
Release of mind,
True wisdom comprehended?
Cessation from their pain
And craving ended?
Work out their own salvation,
Look within?

And in the silence
    Find the strength to win?
How many?
    This would I know.

— Hesper Le Gallienne Hutchinson.

QUESTIONS

1. Which is easier, to talk about being a Buddhist or actually to *be* one?
2. What do we mean when we say we ought to be Buddhists "on the inside" as well as "on the outside"?
3. If we resist temptation what happens to our character?
4. What do we mean by the word "softie"?
5. How can sorrow and disappointment be of help to us?
6. Must we pay for everything or are some of the best things in life free?
7. What are some of the good things that are free of charge?
8. What do we mean by "finding our balance" between joy and sorrow?
9. What is the ancient proverb about barrels?
10. Can you explain the meaning of the poem with this lesson?



PERSEVERANCE

This word *perseverance* means "keeping on." That is, we keep on with whatever we start, such as coming to Dharma school, studying lessons regularly and well, and constantly and unfailingly doing whatever we know we ought to do. Of course, if we find we have mistakenly begun to do anything of an unwise nature, we must not persevere in such action as that. But, to know what is right and to begin to do it and then stop, usually means we are lacking in strength of character. This is certainly not our Buddhist way of living.

Laziness and putting off are great weakeners of character. As a rule, a lazy person plans to do things *tomorrow*. Such persons have good intentions but weak actions. A gardener who knows that his plants need water today and neglects his duty, saying that he will water the garden tomorrow, will soon find a dead garden or else only a few plants left and even those will probably not have blossoms. It is quite the same in our lives. If we fail to do what we know we ought to do, or else constantly put off doing it, presently we find that character has become weak and our lives have no blossoms of good deeds. Good intentions can never take the place of good actions and, once we start on good actions, we ought to persevere. Just to "keep on keeping on" is really a very great virtue.

Next to laziness and putting off, comes the bad habit of doing things by fits and starts, something like a clock that tells time now and then and runs only in a stop and start fashion. If we come to Dharma school just now and then and study just now and then and do good deeds by starts and stops, then we are not much different from the clock that tells the hour only now and then.

So many starts are very good ones, if only they were kept up. It is a rather well-known fact that a brilliant youth who leads a sort of start and stop life, will accomplish far less than a much less brilliant youth who perseveres — who just keeps on steadily. He is not a "quitter" and he will get something of real value of life. Our Buddhist idea of the proper way to live is to know the Dharma and steadily use the Dharma each and every day of life. A "stop-start Buddhist" is only deceiving himself; he is not really a Buddhist at all. Let us keep this word *perseverance* in mind. It is ever so important to everyone and especially to all who are trying to follow Lord Buddha.

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

Once, a long time ago, a race was arranged between a hare and a tortoise. There was much laughter and joking because very many of those who gathered to watch this odd contest were so sure that such a swift creature as the hare would surely be the winner. It just did not seem possible to them that such a slow mover as the tortoise could even make a good start. The race began and the hare sped off like the wind. The tortoise made a slow start but he kept on moving. He neither increased nor decreased his pace. Soon the swift hare was tired. He looked back and could not even see the tortoise who was very far behind. So the hare sat down to take a rest. After a rest he got up and walked slowly on for a time and looked back again. The tortoise was still not in sight. So the hare decided to take a little nap. He made himself comfortable under the shade of a tree and was soon fast asleep. After awhile, the tortoise got as far as the tree and saw the hare asleep. Quietly but slowly and surely, the tortoise moved on. After a time, the tortoise reached the stopping point and was declared the winner of the race. Then the hare finished his nap and started off at a very fast pace to the finish-line. To his great surprise he found the tortoise was already there. Swiftness is no guarantee of winning a race unless there is perseverance with the swiftness.

PERSEVERANCE

Lord Buddha, I will follow
Thy Dharma without cease,
And keeping always at Thy side,
My heart will know Thy peace.

Steadfast and loyal I will be
In thought and word and deed;
Thus persevering all the way,
I shall sow Buddha-seed.

There's sowing time and harvest time,
And what we sow we reap;
Thus children all should persevere
Thy way to know and keep.

— Sumangalo.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the word *perseverance* mean?
2. Name some ways in which we ought to use perseverance.
3. Name two great weakeners of character. Can you name others?
4. Good intentions can never take the place of good ——— ?
5. Do we value a clock that keeps time only now and then?
6. Can we be good Buddhists if we follow the Dharma by fits and starts?
7. Can you tell the story of the hare and the tortoise?
8. What is the moral of this story?
9. If we see two youths, one brilliant and one not so brilliant, but the brilliant one makes little effort and the other one makes constant effort, which one is more likely to be happy and successful in life?
10. Do you know some other ways to express the idea of perseverance?

THE DRAWINGS IN THIS BOOK

We believe our two artists, Mr. Andrew Lim and Mr. Teoh Eng Soon have succeeded admirably in creating line drawings that not only illustrate the meaning of each lesson, but also "tease" us into seeking much deeper meaning in each picture than we might find after a hurried glance.

If we go through the lessons and study each illustration, we are likely to find they encourage us to think, and that is one of the most cherished aims of any Dharma school. It is recommended by the compilers of this book that one or two lesson-sessions be devoted to a careful study of the illustrations. Each pupil should be encouraged to find his own meaning in each picture. If the children have exercise books or paper suitable for pencil or crayon sketching, then it is suggested that they be given a chance to compete for prizes for the best pictures drawn in each age group on an assigned subject or on subjects chosen by each individual child. Experience has shown that some amazingly good talent is often discovered in this way. Moreover, such competitive activity, especially if coloured crayons are used, is much to children's liking. It is the custom of many Dharma Schools in the Hawaiian Islands and North America to hold annual competitions in such drawing. Of course the subjects are always connected with Dharma School lessons.

SONG OF THE FUTURE

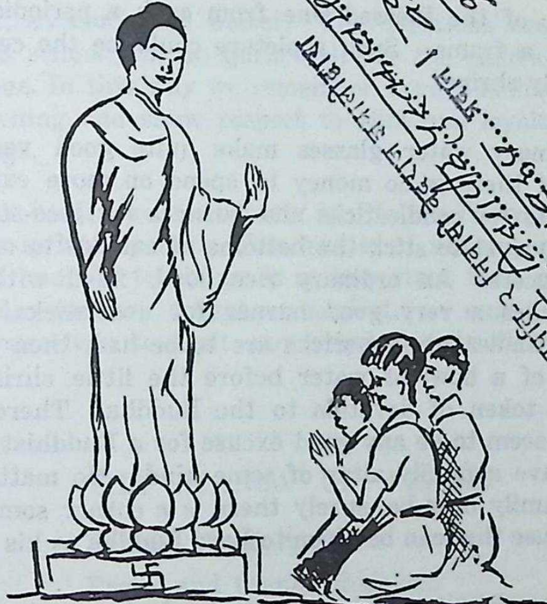
The Picture of the life to be
    We paint in colours all our own;
And in the realm of destiny
    We reap as we have sown.

We live our present lives again
With memory warm or coldly dim;
The pictures of the past remain,
Man's work shall follow him.

— A. C. Constable.

QUESTIONS

1. Can you do line drawings (black and white)?
2. Can you do blackboard sketches?
3. Would several of you like to try some blackboard sketches of Lord Buddha seated under the Bodhi Tree?
4. How many of you like to make little pictures with pencil?
5. Do you think the pictures in this book suggest many thoughts to us?
6. Would you like to do sketches at home and bring them with you next Sunday?
7. How many of you can do "cut outs" with scissors and paper?
8. Could we make a series of pictures and cut outs to tell the story of Lord Buddha's life?
9. Would you like to have a drawing competition with prizes?
10. Which of the illustrations is your favourite? Why?



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REMEMBERING LORD BUDDHA

Every family ought to have its shrine, even if it is only a tiny one. It is really too bad that some families seem to think, because they cannot afford a costly shrine, they must go without any at all. When a small picture or image of the Buddha is given a position of honour in a home, that means the Blessed One has been invited to become a member of that family and to share the house.

Quite often in Buddhist magazines or annuals or even on calendars, we find attractive coloured pictures of the Buddha. After everyone has finished reading the various articles, news items, etc., we usually throw away old magazines. Just think how easy it would be to cut out a picture of the Blessed One from such a periodical and put it in a frame. Such a picture could be the centre of the family shrine.

Ordinary water glasses make quite good vases for flowers if there is no money to spend on more expensive vases. As for candlesticks and burners for joss-sticks, it is so easy just to stick the bottoms of candles to ordinary little saucers. An ordinary rice bowl, filled with clean sand, makes a very good burner for joss-sticks. If no flowers, candles or joss-sticks are to be had, then a daily offering of a bowl of water before the little shrine is a sufficient token of devotion to the Buddha. There really does not seem to be any good excuse for a Buddhist family not to have a family altar of some kind. No matter how poor a family may be, surely there is a corner somewhere in the house that can be given to Lord Buddha as his shrine.

If no picture or statue can be had, many children have the talent to make pictures or statues of their own. Some are clever at modelling in clay and others are good at water colours, oil or crayon drawing. Even frames for pictures are easy to make at home or school. Common silver-coloured foil or any attractively coloured paper that will make a pleasant and harmonious background to a picture can be used. Pictures can be mounted on fairly stiff cardboard or even attached directly to a wall by using drawing pins or tacks.

No Buddhist family should ever neglect to have regular morning and evening devotions. If it is difficult to get all the family together at a regular time, then each individual member of the family can have his own private devotions. It is a wonderful idea to encourage each child to have his own little shrine. If it is all made by the child himself, so much the better. The devotions used in the Dharma school will do quite well for the child's personal devotions. In this way we remember Lord Buddha morning and evening and show respect to Him and loyalty to His teachings.

The habits we form early in life are likely to remain with us in later years. This matter of remembering Lord Buddha and His teachings is so important that, no matter what else we may forget or neglect, we ought never to allow ourselves to omit our regular daily devotions at home.

THE STANZA OF PRAISE

Buddha, Lord, to Thee
Praise and thanks shall be;
Wisdom's way Thy Word has taught us,
Peace and joy Thy Love has brought us
In Eternity.

— A. R. Zorn.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you have a Buddhist shrine at your house?
2. Do you always make your devotions at least once each day?
3. Do you think you could make your own image or picture of the Buddha?

4. If you have no candles, joss-sticks or flowers, what else can you offer at your shrine each day?

5. Name some good devotions for a child to use morning and evening.

6. Why is it so important to form good habits in childhood?

7. If there are several children in a family, is it well for each child to have his own personal shrine?

8. Would you like our class to get some clay or modelling wax and try to make some Buddha-images? What about water colour, oil or crayon pictures?

9. Would you like to enter a competition for the three or four best shrines made by members of our Dharma school?

10. What is your favourite personal devotion?

A BUDDHIST CATECHISM

Ques. 1 What is your religion?
Ans. I am a Buddhist.

Ques. 2 What is Buddhism?
Ans. Buddhism is the teaching of all the Buddhas.

Ques. 3 What is a Buddha?
Ans. A Buddha is a very wise man who has freed himself from all ignorance.

Ques. 4 Is Buddha a God?
Ans. No, He is far greater than any God or ordinary man.

Ques. 5 Why is He greater than any God or ordinary man?
Ans. Because of His own efforts He found the Truth.

Ques. 6 Is the word Buddha a proper name?
Ans. No, the word Buddha is not a proper name; it is a title.

Ques. 7 What does the word Buddha mean?
Ans. The word Buddha means "The Enlightened One."

Ques. 8 Have there been more than one Buddha?
Ans. Yes, there have been many Buddhas.

Ques. 9 When did the Buddha live?
Ans. He lived more than 2,500 years ago.

Ques. 10 What was he called?
Ans. He was called Shakyamuni.

Ques. 11 What does Shakyamuni mean?
Ans. Shakyamuni means "Wise man of the Shakyas."

Ques. 12 What was Shakyamuni's real name?
Ans. Siddhartha Gautama.

Ques. 13 Who were his parents?
Ans. King Suddhodana and Queen Maya.

Ques. 14 Who did King Suddhodana rule over?
Ans. He ruled a tribe in India called Shakya.

Ques. 15 Where was Prince Siddhattha born?
Ans. In Lumbini's garden

Ques. 16 When was he born?
Ans. 623 B.C. (approximately).

Ques. 17 What happened when he was born?
Ans. Wisemen foretold that he would either become a great king or a greater teacher.

Ques. 18 What did the wise hermit Asita say about the child?
Ans. "Verily, this child will become a supreme Buddha, and will show all men the path to Salvation."

Ques. 19 Why did Asita weep after saying this?
Ans. Because he would not live to see the glory of the child.

Ques. 20 Was the King glad to hear what the wise men said about his son?
Ans. No, the King did not want his son to become a great Teacher; he wanted him to become a great King.

Ques. 21 What did the King do to prevent the prince from becoming a Buddha?
Ans. He made him beautiful palaces, and tried to keep away all knowledge of old age, sickness and death from him.

Ques. 22 Did this plan of the King succeed?
Ans. No, when the prince was passing along the streets of the city, he met an old man, a sick man and a funeral.

Ques. 23 What did he think when he became aware of these things?

Ans. How can I find a way to save all men from such suffering?

Ques. 24 What did the prince decide to do?

Ans. To leave his home and go out and search for the way.

Ques. 25 Was it hard for him to leave his home?

Ans. Yes, because he had a beautiful wife and a dear little baby boy.

Ques. 26 Did his wife try to stop his going?

Ans. No, because he left in the middle of the night without telling her anything.

Ques. 27 How old was he when he left home?

Ans. Twenty-nine years old.

Ques. 28 Where did he go first?

Ans. To a place named Rajagriha.

Ques. 29 Who visited him there?

Ans. King Bimbisara and his court.

Ques. 30 Where did the prince go then?

Ans. To the forests where there were wise men, whose disciple he became.

Ques. 31 What did these wise men teach?

Ans. They taught that by prayer and by suffering the way of truth could be found.

Ques. 32 Did the prince find the truth in this way?

Ans. No.

Ques. 33 What did he do then?

Ans. He went to the forest and tortured his body, and ate very little food.

Ques. 34 Who joined him there?

Ans. Five Holy men.

Ques. 35 How long did the prince continue to do these things?

Ans. For nearly six years till he nearly died of weakness and pain.

Ques. 36 What did he do then?

Ans. He decided to eat enough to keep the strength in his body, and not torture himself any more, but to look for the Truth within his own mind.

Ques. 37 Did he succeed this time?

Ans. Yes, while sitting beneath the Bodhi tree he suddenly saw all Truth, the reason of suffering, birth and death, and the way to transcend them.

Ques. 38 What does transcend mean?

Ans. Transcend means to rise above and go beyond.

Ques. 39 Would you call a person a Buddhist who had merely been born of Buddhist parents?

Ans. Certainly not, a Buddhist is one who professes a belief in the Buddha as the noblest of teachers, and in the doctrine preached by Him.

Ques. 40 Sum up the teaching of the Buddha in one verse.

Ans. To cease from all evil,
To attain virtue,
To cleanse one's own heart,
This is the religion of the Buddhas.

Ques. 41 I notice you say, religion of the Buddhas; have there been many Buddhas?

Ans. Yes, Shakyamuni was the fourth Buddha in the present *Kalpa*. He is an historical personage and his name was Siddhartha Gautama.

Ques. 42 Who, and what, are the three guides that a Buddhist is supposed to follow?

Ans. The three guides are Buddha, The Law and The Brotherhood.

Ques. 43 What do we mean by this?

Ans. We mean that we regard the Lord Buddha as our all-wise Teacher, that we believe his Law contains the principles of Truth and justice, and that the Brotherhood is the exponent of this Law.

Ques. 44 How does Buddhism compare with other religions regarding the number of its followers?

Ans. The followers of Buddha outnumber those of every other religious teacher.

Ques. 45 What is the estimated number?

Ans. About 500,000,000—one-third the population of the world.

Ques. 46 Have wars been fought or human blood been spilled to spread Buddha's Law?

Ans. So far as we know, it has not caused the spilling of a drop of blood.

Ques. 47 How then do you account for the wonderful way it has spread?

Ans. Because founded on Truth, its moral teaching is sufficient for all needs.

Ques. 48 How did the Buddha spread his Dharma?

Ans. For 45 years the Buddha travelled widely in preaching the Law, and sent his wisest followers to do the same in other parts.

Ques. 49 Is Buddhism older than Christianity?

Ans. Yes, about 500 years older.

Ques. 50 What are the signs by which we know that it is spreading?

Ans. (a) Translations of Buddhist Literature are appearing in Magazines, Reviews and Newspapers, as well as in book form.

(b) Buddhist and non-Buddhist lecturers are publicly speaking on Buddhism in western countries.

(c) Buddhist societies are to be found in almost every Western country.

Ques. 51 What do we mean when we say that the Buddha became Enlightened?

Ans. We mean that he saw the absolute Truth, namely, "That all life is suffering," "The cause of suffering," "The ceasing of suffering," "The path that led to the cessation of suffering."

Ques. 52 What are those four truths called?

Ans. They are called "The Four Noble Truths."

Ques. 53 What did the Buddha mean by "All life is suffering?"

Ans. He meant that the very fact of existence is suffering.

Ques. 54 What is the cause of suffering?

Ans. Ignorance and desire.

Ques. 55 What does the "Cessation of suffering" mean?

Ans. Nirvana.

Ques. 56 What is the path by which we attain Nirvana?

Ans. The Noble Eight-fold Path.

Ques. 57 What is the Noble Eight-fold Path?
Ans. Highest Understanding, Highest Mindedness, Highest Speech, Highest Action, Highest Livelihood, Highest Endeavour, Highest Recollectedness, and Highest Concentration.

Ques. 58 Divide the Eight-fold Path into three divisions.
Ans. 1st. Knowledge or Mind Culture.
2nd. Realization or Wisdom.
3rd. Manifestation or Morality.

Ques. 59 Which belong to the knowledge division?
Ans. Highest Endeavour, Highest Recollectedness, Highest Concentration.

Ques. 60 Which come under the heading of Realization?
Ans. Highest Understanding, Highest Mindedness.

Ques. 61 Which come under the heading of Manifestation?
Ans. Highest Speech, Highest Action and Highest Livelihood.

Ques. 62 What is Karma?
Ans. Karma is the law of cause and effect. (All that we are is the result of what we have thought.)

Ques. 63 What is the meaning of Nirvana?
Ans. Attainment of Truth.

Ques. 64 What is the ultimate goal towards which we are striving?
Ans. We are striving to attain Salvation.

Ques. 65 What does Salvation mean?
Ans. Freedom from ignorance, attainment of the Truth.

Ques. 66 Is knowledge sufficient without action, and inner realization of truth?
Ans. No, knowledge must lead to correct action and inner realization.

Ques. 67 Has Buddhism any right to be considered a scientific religion?

Ans. Yes, but Buddhism does not at all depend on science for its source of truth. We are glad that so many of our ancient teachings are now gaining scientific recognition as being proven facts.

Ques. 68 Is Buddhism a tolerant religion?

Ans. Yes, it respects everyone's right to make his own decisions, in religion as in everything else.

Ques. 69 What is a good way to describe Buddhism in a few words?

Ans. It is a plan for living in such a way as to derive highest benefit from life.

Ques. 70. Is it likely that a person who really understands the Buddhist doctrines could ever sincerely adopt another religion?

Ans. No, because the Buddha-dharma answers the deepest questions of our minds and meets the noblest needs of our emotions.

THE INVOCATION OF THE ETERNAL

" O, Thou Eternal One,
Thou Perfection of Time,
Thou Truest Truth,
Thou Immutable Essence of all Change,
Thou Most excellent Radiance of Mercy,
Thou Infinite Compassion,
Thou Pity, Thou Charity,
Thou who art called the Buddha,
We take refuge in Thee!"

(An invocation from Thailand—Revised Translation)

With bad advisors forever left behind,
From paths of evil he departs for eternity,
Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light
And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings
of Samantabhadra's deeds,
I now universally transfer.
May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Pure Land of
Limitless Light!

~The Vows of Samantabhadra~

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha,
And be born in His Western Pure Land of
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill
Without exception these Great Vows,
To delight and benefit all beings.

~The Vows of Samantabhadra
Avatamsaka Sutra~

DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA

南無阿彌陀佛

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Thanks for your co-operation.
Namo Amitabha!

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